

PHD

How can I create my own living educational theory as I offer you an account of my educational development?

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**How can I create my own living educational
theory as I offer you an account of my
educational development?**

submitted by Moira Laidlaw

for the degree of Ph.D.

of the University of Bath,

1996

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'Only connect...' (E. M. Forster)

'This is the mood of qualitative research, a mood created by the realization that human beings are self-defining, self-creating, condemned to meaning and in search of possibility.' (Greene, 1986, p.69)

'What is the good specific to human beings? Each individual has to enquire: what is my good as a human being?' (MacIntyre, 1990, p.128)

'The greatest stories are those which resonate our beginnings and intuit our endings...and dissolve them both into one.' (Ben Okri, 1996, p. 24)

For:

Jack Whitehead and the Action Research Group at the School of Education, Bath University.

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Abstract.

I intend my thesis to be a contribution to both educational research methodology and educational knowledge. In this thesis I have tried to show what it means to me, a teacher-researcher, to bring, amongst others, an aesthetic standard of judgement to bear on my educative relationships with Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Higher Degree education students and classroom pupils in the action enquiry: 'How do I help my students and pupils to improve the quality of their learning?' By showing how my own fictional narratives can be used to express ontological understandings in a claim to educational knowledge, and by using insights from Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner' to illuminate my own educational values, I intend to make a contribution to action research methodology. By describing and explaining my own educational development in the creation of my own 'living educational theory', I intend to make a contribution to educational knowledge.

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The General Prologue

1995/1996. This Ph.D. resubmission is the tale of my own educational development. I am a teacher-researcher working in a local comprehensive school for girls and my curricular subject is English. Unlike a traditional thesis I am going to begin with an account of my classroom practice because my life as a teacher-researcher is grounded in my educative relationships with pupils. By writing a General Prologue I am aiming to introduce you to some of my core educational values in action which the rest of this text is an attempt to explain. I am not at this stage attempting to explain them. You may, if you wish, skip this Prologue of about 40 pages, and go directly into the Introduction. This more traditionally contextualises this thesis' claims to knowledge, explains some of the use of language within the text, and gives the outline of the thesis as a whole. I hope, however, you will read the following account as it represents for me the heart of my life as a teacher-researcher.

The class I am about to present to you is a mixed-attainment group of 27 Year Seven girls working on the poem 'The Ancient Mariner', by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In the first half term, before we started reading the poem, I had accustomed them to an action planning approach to their learning in which they isolated concerns in English and worked towards solutions. I also encouraged them to look at ways of evaluating their own strategies and changing their learning methods in the light of their new insights. One of the ways I did this was through learning partners. Each girl chose a friend who would help her with her (mostly) written work, and act as a reader and editor. She would also be expected to make constructive comments on her friend's work before it was handed in to me.

**How can I account for own my educational development by
teaching 'The Ancient Mariner' to Rebecca, Zoë and other
members of their Year Seven class?**

**'He holds him with his glittering eye,
The wedding guest stood still,
And listens like a three year child
The mariner hath his will.'**

Rebecca: *'I don't want to read my work out, Miss. I don't think it's very good.'* (12.10.95.)

Rebecca: *'I'm really glad I did this project and presented my work today because I think this is the best work I've ever done!'* (2.2.96.)

Zoë: *'Sometimes I think you don't like me as much as Poppy and Kelly. '* (21.9.95.)

Zoë: *'You tell us we should try to be nice to each other and it's really hard isn't it? But when it works, it's great. I love working in this class in English. Why can't the world be like this class?'* (14.6.96.)

Rebecca's and Zoë's journeys have not been smooth ones by any means. I have chosen to concentrate mainly on these two pupils for several reasons. Let me take Rebecca first. She has written copiously and talked to me on many occasions about how she might improve her work. Secondly she is a highly gifted writer and has challenged me more than any individual pupil in my career in terms of helping her to improve the quality of her curricular learning in English. Thirdly, because of her abilities and my lack of perception at times, she has suffered some disaffection within the group which has challenged my sensitivities and sense of educational responsibility for her, and caused her some distress. Working out ways around these problems has been a crucial stage in my own understanding of my responsibilities as an educator, not only with her, but in general.

Zoë's educational development is, I believe, closely linked with Rebecca's and my own. She brought starkly to my attention, and continued to discuss with me, issues to do with fairness in the classroom. She challenged me profoundly in my own view of myself as an educator. In taking her seriously I believe I have learnt a great deal.

I will not claim simplistic causal links between my growing understanding in action in the classroom, and Rebecca's, Zoë's and other's responses to this poem which I view

as educative. Each of the girls is her own centre of consciousness and brings her own view of reality into the classroom. However, I am claiming that the processes we have engaged in have helped Rebecca, Zoë and others to express something of value not only to themselves but to me and, I am further claiming, to our educational development. Through my helping them to explore some deeply moral issues in ways which have satisfied their own educational standards of judgement, I believe we have both benefited educationally. I too have been encouraged through their responses to explore some moral issues of my own and thus am in a better position to turn my educational values more fully into action. It is of course, not a simple $A + B = C$. The connectedness of our responses has not been in a simple linear progression. I do believe, however, that the connectedness has constituted part of the educational value of the work we have been doing. As I write this paper, I might, like Rebecca, be able to say now, 'I think this is the 'best' work I have ever done!'

Beginnings:

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.'

On 5.11.95. I read the first four parts of the poem to the group. The following is taken from my journal written that evening, notes made with the help of a transcript of the discussions during the lesson:

'I had an experience with 'The Ancient Mariner' this morning that goes beyond my previous experience in terms of its apparent impact on the children and on me. This always seems to happen with this poem. Each time I explore its depths I come up with something more profound and meaningful. I love it so much and put everything I have into reading it aloud. I feel there is something so important about what it is saying, its moral framework, that I want to get it right. To a certain extent I have to control my own emotional reactions because they would get in the way of communicating its power to the children. Time after time I choose to read this poem with young people because it seems to encapsulate everything I believe in in terms of a moral universe at

whose centre there is meaning, not chaos, in which people have to take responsibility for their own actions, and in which goodness and evil exist as embodied realities, not abstractions. Such qualities in the poem enable us to deliberate about what matters in human existence. Its universe is an archetypal one. The choices the Mariner makes may appear at first to be arbitrary ones but the consequences are not. I believe that one of my roles as an educator is to enable young people to make informed and empowered choices about their own destinies. Although at times things may happen to them in their lives over which they have little control, I believe we have to be in a position to deal with fate and the moral issues which surround ways we have of making meanings out of our lives.

How to start? I did the usual thing, asked them to sit quietly, led them through a few minutes of silent imaginings through a leafy wood, as they closed their eyes and began gradually to sit more and more still. Then I read the first part, my voice gentle and wondering. As Coleridge described the ice and the cold, Rebecca shivered, Laura-Lee opened her eyes and stared at me, Zoë stared ahead, her eyes fixed somewhere, I suspect, within. Katie blinked - nervously? Hannah shifted on her chair, Emily screwed her eyes tight shut and folded her arms tightly in front of her. Carly bit her lip. When the ice did split with a thunder fit, and the albatross crossed their paths, perhaps 'we hailed it in God's name'. Whatever presence sometimes comes into my classroom and says, 'yes, go on, go on!' it seemed to be materialising then.

I felt surrounded by a chill air despite the warmth of the room and knew that I had to maintain this spirit or it would leave. If it left now, I would be missing an opportunity that experience has taught me is a vital one. And carefully, so carefully, as if I were nurturing the spirit myself, I kept the tears from my voice as the Mariner took aim with his crossbow and fired. I felt the dislocation as if it were happening for the first time, in real time and real space, not as an archetype in a poem, as a description of someone else's devising. I felt as if something were being created as I spoke the words. It is not often in my life that words appear to have ceased being symbols and become the reality themselves: as if it were happening to me, to the girls, and as if we were all responsible at the same time. I felt as if the art of the poem were becoming a living

truth. Something was happening here that had never happened before. Such was the power of the moment that the poem seemed to be coming alive through the words I was speaking, through the occasion, through the apparent intense listening by the girls. Together we seemed to be creating the poem and somewhere in the scheme of things, we were all responsible for the horror which was to follow, as all of us are capable of evil as well as good.

I was aware of the enormous potential for self-indulgence that this moment represented, as well as the potential for the girls to explore something deeply moral in a supportive and loving environment. It could have been merely self-indulgent if I had simply displayed my own extreme emotion. This would have been an egotistical response and the antithesis of anything educational because my power as the adult there would have been to focus attention on me and not on their own responses to the poem and on the poem itself. I wanted us to explore the deepest meanings of the poem which do not reside, it seems to me, in anything to do with personal ego. This killing of the albatross can be interpreted as the poet's metaphor for the crucifixion of Christ but it is not a prescriptive metaphor. I see the murder representing the destruction of good by evil. Thus it needed very careful, sensitive handling. If that process were coming alive in our classroom then I had to become an anchor of goodness in these potentially stormy waters. Our very humanity seemed to be being called into question. As the adult in this situation, I must steer these young, possibly vulnerable people through this experience, and achieve educationally what the poet achieves poetically. He explores evil and good from the safety of hindsight and goodness. I must enable the children to explore such profound meanings from a safe haven of kindness, interest in their personal responses, attention to the beauty of the poem, a savouring of the language, and a sense of anticipation of the surreal descriptions to follow.

Although it was hard to stop because the poem seemed to be gathering a momentum of its own, I mustn't read on. I stopped and looked around. Gradually, the children opened their eyes, shifted in their seats.

'Oh, Miss,' said Rosemary. 'Why did he do it?'

'I don't know,' I replied. 'It's a great mystery. The poet never tells us.'

'I bet he was jealous', said Rebecca.

'Jealous of what?'

'Everyone was taking notice of the bird and not him,' replied Rebecca.

'I felt cold,' said Michelle. And she shivered.

'I think this is a horrid poem. I mean it makes me feel funny,' remarked Zoë.

'What happens next?' asked Jo.

'It's awful!' exclaimed Poppy. 'How could he do it? The bird wasn't doing any harm.'

I read on. I didn't need to ask anyone to listen. As I began, 'The Sun now rose upon the right/ Out of the sea came he,' every child closed her eyes. The power of this poem had never gripped me so entirely and I felt captured in a way I have not experienced before. I was conscious of something almost menacing happening, and recognised the necessity of reminding myself of the classroom we sat in, the beauty of their intent faces, and the calm of my own voice. When I described:

*'The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.'*

'Ugh,' said Esther softly.

'Yuk!' exclaimed Kelly,

their interjections were in no way intrusive. No one giggled. No one moved in a way which suggested they were not taking the poem seriously. In a sense, they listened, as the wedding guest did, like a 'three years child'.

I didn't stop at the end of Part Two, although the albatross being hung round the Mariner's neck caused some screwing up of faces, some eyes to open in apparent shock and some (nervous?) laughter. I pressed on. The momentum of the poem must now reach its height with the description of the sailors, all but the Mariner, 'with

heavy thump, a lifeless lump, they dropped down one by one.'

At the end of Part Three I hesitated. I didn't know what their responses would be and didn't want to continue if it were going to be too much for them to cope with.

'Oh, Miss, it's awful,' said Rebecca. 'I can just see it.' Her voice sounded genuinely distressed. I would stop. It was decided.

'Yes', I reply. 'So can I.'

'Why did they all die and not the Ancient Mariner?' asked Kelly. 'He's the one who should've died.'

'Yeah, why didn't he die? It's stupid. It's not fair', said Helen.

'Does that mean that he's alive and all the others are dead?' said Zoë.

'Yes it does.'

'That must be awful. He's alive and all these men are staring at him. It says that, doesn't it? They're all staring at him,' Zoë continued.

'Yes, they are. What do you think is going to happen next?'

'He's going to kill himself,' said Laura.

'He ought to,' said Kim.

'What do you think, Julia?'

'I think God will send another bird,' replied Julia. 'And it'll do something awful to him.'

'Are you going to read the rest of it, Miss?' asked Hannah.

'O.K., Part Four, then.

I read the next part, for me the most potentially horrifying descriptions in the poem. Certainly I read it with a dangerous undercurrent in my tones. When I got to the part:

*'The many men so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on and so did I,'*

I emphasised the sliminess, accentuated the dreadful isolation in the words, 'and so did I'. Rebecca opened her eyes and stared at me. So when it came to the part when the Mariner was able to bless the water snakes (snakes now, not 'slimy things') I had fiercely to control my own personal response of huge relief, which could have easily expressed itself as tears. After all this is the first aspect of hope in what has appeared up to now to be an evocation of a malign universe. This is the first time that the Mariner has committed a good act. He has moved beyond his own ego and recognised the reality of other creatures. He has grown morally into someone who is for the first time taking responsibility for his actions and ceasing to see his own needs as the only ones which matter. At last he is seeing his responsibility for making connections between himself and others, and I felt as if I were understanding for the first time the enormity of his new insight. The question was, how could I help to make it live for them too in ways which would matter to them? And why does it matter that it should, and I believe that it does matter? I am beginning to learn how I access myself in order to know what is of value to me. But how do I help others to access themselves in ways which will enable them to value their own insights and knowledge?

As I read the words:

*'O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unaware...'*

I looked around at the girls and felt their beauty and I was filled with love for them. Yet again the poem had reminded me of what I feel to be of importance in my own existence, and enabled me to access those aspects of myself which speak directly to children and to myself. It was a difficult moment in one sense, because I was intensely aware of my own reactions and their right to their own reality and the beginning of a shared responsibility for their responses to the situation, which seemed to be evoking quite a palpable spirit amongst us. When the albatross fell off and sank like lead into the sea, Rebecca closed her eyes for a long moment and when she opened them again,

I saw traces of tears. I felt a closeness to her that was almost painful, and tears pricked my own eyes. She seemed to see my recognition and smiled as she blinked. I smiled back. Not a word spoken.

I know that what has happened this morning will always live with me. The poem came alive and during the reading I was reminded, as is the Mariner, about the reality of others. The girls seemed to become more real to me. The poem enabled me to recognise them afresh as individuals. Because of the power of this poem, I could recognise, as if for the first time, the beauty and loveliness of the girls as they responded. I am also struck, as a classroom teacher, with how few questions I asked during our conversations. I was responding largely to their responses. That is probably unusual. I know that I tend to ask most of the questions, to which I already have a fair idea of the answers. They seemed to be asking questions to which they wished to know the answers for themselves. They were not my questions, but their own. I need to build on this. This is not a simple process, not merely a simple way to get them to ask questions but an exploration of what values underlie such processes. What happens to power and knowledge in the educative relationship when the learners are asking their own questions? When they are motivated to find out because it seems genuinely worthwhile to them to do so? If the worthwhileness to them is also an aspect of what seems worthwhile to me as the educator and the responsible adult, then it seems a wholly educative undertaking. Perhaps this is the value of the poem for me as a teacher-researcher: it leads to an exploration of such moral questions in an educative way for all concerned. Perhaps that is why time and time again I come back to it.

There is something else here too. Each time I engage with the poem in this living way - in other words when it becomes part of the way I externalise my relationships with others as I did in the classroom this morning (and never so powerfully in my opinion) - then I find more and more in the poem and more and more in the children. I was really overcome by my love for them this morning and there doesn't seem such a distinction between my love for them and my love for the poem. They both derive from the same root. It is something to do with my own ontology and has something

too of my own ethics. That is how they are linked - in my practice with the girls as I try to help them improve the quality of learning. And this writing shows the connections in a developmental way and points the way toward the creation of my own living educational theory.

We are underway:

*'And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken -
The ice was all between.'*

On 13.10.96. Rebecca had written to me in her journal about her creative writing (and here as elsewhere I have not corrected syntax or spelling in order to reproduce as closely as possible their own insights):

'With the storys I write I want to expand my limits and learn new words because I find I'll end up using the same words over and over again. I want to have a variety, but it seems I end up gobsmacked in the middle of a story, could you help me on this?'

I had replied the next day:

'Do come and talk to me about your concern, Rebecca. 'Gobsmacked'?! Now, what sort of a word is that to use with your English teacher? Seriously, though, when I read your homework - which I found absolutely thrilling by the way - I wasn't aware of the repetition. Let's find out where you think the weakness in your style is, and then we can work on it. Ask Hannah to come along too if she's your learning partner now...And Rebecca, I'm so very proud of you. Your stories (note spelling) are truly amazing.'

I had not come across someone of Rebecca's ability with metaphor before. That she should be concerned about the level of her vocabulary surprised me, but I realised that a way to help her develop her creative talents would lie in my taking her own sense of her abilities completely seriously and starting from her perceived starting point. I wrote in

my journal on 16.10.95.:

'I am concerned about how I am going to teach Rebecca. When I read her original responses to 'Beowulf' I knew that I was teaching someone exceptional in terms of her ability to evoke powerful metaphors. Her tacit understanding of the power and meaning of metre and onomatopoeia, which resonate in such lines she was already writing then as 'the grasses of the moors whispered dark secrets', reveal a spiritual and creative maturity that I am going to find difficult to approach in my usual way. In most circumstances, I don't believe I approach the understanding of a child's work from behind: usually I am able to stand in the front of it and coax it forward. This isn't going to be the same. How can I help someone with her insight and creativity? I could not have written that quoted sentence myself. I feel that I have much to learn from 'teaching' her. I am going to have to use her own insights to move her forward. She clearly has a sense of her own abilities. Perhaps I should stop judging her as an eleven year old child and judge her by her own criteria. Judge her as Rebecca. There's something here to do with trust. I have to trust her to be a competent judge of her own abilities. Is this just because she is so clever in a way I value? I really don't know but my instincts here tell me to let her creativity loose, to let her explore what it is she clearly wants to explore. Perhaps here the ipsative criterion is the most significant one in terms of our own educational development. Balanced with this, however, must be the sense as well that Rebecca is only one of many, not more significant because of her particular gifts. I need to stress carefully here her own role as a learning partner with Hannah and to encourage her to work with others. We can all gain from each other in this class. I am perceiving that truth anew. It is a matter of balance.'

*'One after one, by the star-dogged Moon
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang
And cursed me with his eye....'*

*...They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose
Nor spake nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.'*

On 16.11.95. we re-read the parts of the poem framed by the above verses. I then

asked them to rehearse a mime to illustrate the horror of those descriptions. Jo was the Ancient Mariner, Rebecca played Life-in-Death, Kelly played Death, Laura was the helmsman, Emma the spirit from the deep, Zoë played cards on deck with her friends. Emily sat in the 'crowsnest'. Each girl chose a role for herself, either explicitly from the poem, or from their own ideas about what jobs might be performed on a ship.

On 29.11.95. I videoed the final presentation. Rosemary wrote about it in her journal:

'I thought Jo was brilliant as the mariner. She looked really frightend. I think she was really scared. It was wierd when we fell down when Rebecca pointed at us. I got really cold and did you see Laura's face she just stared when she was dead. When it was finished I found it hard to get up because I felt really heavy. Are we going to do more drama? I hope so. It was really good fun.'

Chloë wrote:

'I want to do that drama again can we wach the viedo. that was the best lesson we had so far. I like it when we act it out because then we feel like were ther.'

Julia recorded in her journal:

'We all took it seriously, didn't we? It made the discriptions come alive for me. I was next to Kim and her face was so grim I could belive she was dying. I see what you mean now that Drama is serious and important. When can we do that again?'

Zoë wrote:

'29.11.95. i like doing this. I think we shuld all have turns at doing the big parts. When are we all getting a chance at the ancient mariner part.'

I wrote to Zoë on 30.11.95.:

'I hope you don't feel you're not getting a fair chance. Let's talk about it, Zoë.'

I find it significant now that I have no record of any meeting with her, which might suggest that I was not then aware of the importance of Zoë's early challenges. (See page 20, 'Stormy Waters' for greater clarification of this point.)

For homework on that day I asked the class to write a paragraph about their part in the drama. I told them that I wanted a description of their actions, written in the third person. As they would only have one evening in which to complete it, I didn't want to burden them with too much detail. Such a description would act as a marker of their understanding. Rebecca wrote three sides, in the first person, including this:

(I play Life and death who wins the ancient mariner.) 'I played with an inner urge to win that wretched man's soul. I rolled those dice with my pale hands of death. Each roll seemed like the world, my insanity rushed through my blood, the intensity and pressure surrounded me and that of my partner, death, his face a mere shadow of the souls he had claimed through this childish game, his boney hands snatched the dice and rolled, yes, at last...I slowly took one by one, each one's soul, and down they fell, their eyes still mesmerized - on the ancient mariner, one by one they fell, slowly, and mysteriously, I giggled madly to myself, death's eyes, of nothingness, stared at me, almost as green as the sea, with envy.'

I wrote at the end of her work:

'2 credits! What a wonderfully vivid imagination you have, Rebecca and such a powerful use of vocabulary. I love reading your work. It's exciting to watch your images grow. I wonder sometimes whether you use too many adjectives (describing words) and whether you could gain a more powerful atmosphere through greater conciseness. Remember when you wrote that wonderful line about 'Beowulf': 'The grasses of the moors whispered dark secrets'? (I know it off by heart!) I think it works so well because it is unusual - and the menace comes from the idea that grass is conscious - and in this case evil. The word 'dark' placed with 'secrets' is masterly. I

feel you're experimenting at the moment and I really want to encourage you to continue doing that. You're a very gifted writer and I am delighted to be teaching you.'

Rebecca's learning partner is also a gifted writer in the sense that she uses vocabulary skilfully and is able to evoke a powerful atmosphere through her descriptions. Her writing is more syntactically accurate than Rebecca's, and I felt that both girls could help each other improve the quality of their written work. I was also concerned to encourage them to help each other as I felt that the values of care for the other, engagement in the reality of others, were educationally sound as well as representing the morality in the poem. The Mariner's greatest sin lies in his disconnecting from others and trying to absolve himself from culpability because he forgets the connectedness of all creation, and his responsibility in the whole scheme of things. This too, at a less obvious level, is the sin of the other mariners who conspire in this disconnection and moral weakness. I felt it was important with the girls explicitly to encourage values to do with connectedness in our classroom. If they are brought only to see themselves as individuals without responsibility for others as well as themselves, then I do not believe this is educational. What I perceive as included within the educational, is what opens individuals to a sense of their own unique place in the scheme of things. A scheme in which they are aware of the potential for their own unique and good contribution to the world, but which will include some significant collaboration with others. I want to open up these processes of connectedness in my classroom and the poem seems to me to have the capacity to become a living philosophy within the educative relationships I develop with the girls. See the end of this piece of writing for some corroboration of this belief.

In her homework about her part in the drama, Hannah wrote about staring over the side at the icy waves. At one point she included this:

'I felt as if I were growing into the groaning ice, which twinkled and heaved beside me.'

This sentence moved me deeply, because I believe that it showed an identification with

the poem that went beyond mere description. It moved me because I believe it embodies the values just described. The poem seemed to have evoked a living reality for Hannah. It was as if in one sense she had really been on board, and had stared over the side. She had felt the cold and the menace. She had heard the weird screams of the ice as it began to melt. Even more significant in my opinion is Hannah's sense of the way in which the surroundings and the sailor she represented becoming one and the same. I believe she is revealing a sense of the connectedness of all things. This is Coleridge's point. As he says in the conclusion to the poem:

*'He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'*

Love is not an abstract concept to Coleridge as exemplified in the poem, but is personified through the spirit which joins all living things together in harmony and enables the Mariner at last to bless the water snakes:

*'A spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unaware.'*

This is what I wish for my classroom: that we might all become acutely aware of our individuality and recognise the responsibilities we share in trying to work together in harmony as we do something worthwhile.

In pencil, Rebecca had underlined Hannah's phrase above and written beside it: *'Wow! I wish I'd written that!'* I know exactly what she meant. On 3.12.95. I sat with Hannah and Rebecca and had the following conversation with them:

Moir: *I liked that phrase too. I think it's beautiful.*

Hannah: *Yeah, I read Rebecca's story and it was better than mine.*

Moir: *What do you mean?*

Hannah: *You asked us to do this description and it wasn't very interesting.*

Moira: *I didn't want to give you too much for one evening.*

Rebecca: *I just decided to write mine the way I did. Once I started I couldn't stop.*

Moira: *I like it when you do more interesting things with what I set you.*

Hannah: *I read Rebecca's and then I just got these ideas. I really enjoyed writing it. I would've written more but I didn't have time. Dad said I had to go to bed.*

Rebecca: *Yeah, I get that as well.*

(laughter)

I think there are several significant aspects to this. Rebecca had inspired Hannah by her initiative. Rebecca had tacitly refused to do what I had asked because it would have limited her creativity. I had opened up to her previously the opportunities to her to take risks with her creativity, and whether or not she was responding directly to my explicit encouragement, something in the situation was enabling her to be adventurous. Perhaps she was simply enjoying the exploration. (N.B. In the New Year, 1996, I asked her specifically why she had chosen to work in that way. *'I like working in my own way and you encourage us to work in ways that suit us. If I like something I just want to write and write.'*)

Hannah had been inspired to rewrite something without any referral to me: she wanted to express something of importance to her, and I believe that Rebecca played an explicit role in this flowering.

**'The ice did split with a thunder fit
The helmsman steered us through.'**

Rebecca elected to write an illustrated story of the Ancient Mariner's adventures. The first draft of her story included the following:

'The boy still sat there staring into the darkness, his pupils as if they had been replaced now by the spirits like a pair of black pearls which shimmered in the dim light as the icy wind sailed through his hair.'

In commenting on her work I wrote to her:

'I wish I had your grace in my words. At its best your style is worthy of real poetry. Sometimes the images don't quite work for me, though. The picture of the black pearls is potentially wonderful but it becomes awkward, I think, if you imagine the pupils being 'replaced' by spirits. That's gruesome, and I think you wanted another effect, didn't you? Remember that the way you use language is all you have to control your readers' reactions. If these comments don't make sense, then see me.'

She amended this to:

'The young boy still sat there staring into the darkness, his eyes a pair of black pearls which shimmered in the dim light...'

Stormy Waters:

**'Each turned his face with a ghastly pang
And cursed me with his eye.'**

All was not plain sailing, however. Rebecca's gifts were again becoming the subject of discussion with girls who lacked confidence, it seemed to me, in their own abilities. Indeed Zoë had written to me back in September:

'21.9.95. Sometimes I don't feel you take much notice of me you ask Lisa and Chloë to read their work and Esther is always answering questions. Don't you think my work is very good? Sometimes I think you don't like me as much as Poppy and Kelly. will you write to me. I don't like it when you don't take any notice of me. I know I'm not as good at english as Rosemary or Rebecca but I do try hard.'

Although I had felt this was sad and I was surprised by it, I was pleased that she was able to express her feelings so honestly. It is not often in my experience that a child is able to tell an authority figure so openly about her experience of that authority. I believe this took great courage. Certainly I had been touched by her candour. Whether she had

grounds for her feelings was not the only point here, it seemed to me. In other words I needed to be more sensitively aware of the effect of my teaching on the girls in my care - that is my responsibility, part of the moral crafting I believe good teaching to be. I am struck by the significance of Zoë's making contact with me in this way however, because it enabled me to develop with her a closer educative relationship that aimed to help her to grow more independent and secure. My reflections on her comments, though, had revealed to me the possibility that I was able to respond so enthusiastically to Rebecca because of the similarity, as I perceive it, of our gifts. She too is an accomplished writer and seems to value similar aspects of English to me. She delights in metaphor and poetic expression. She reads poetry for pleasure and given the choice will sit up late at night and write stories. It had therefore always been easy for me to engage Rebecca in conversation because we appeared to have a great deal in common. Maybe Zoë had, then, genuinely been picking up an inequality in my treatment of the girls. Perhaps I did not simply discriminate through the work. It is possible that I too confused the worth of the child with the worth of the work. Teaching Rebecca in the way I had, and trying to be open to Zoë's criticism (which was, I believe, at least partially a result of the way I had taught them both) should have encouraged this aspect of my own educational development.

After her comments I thought what I therefore needed to do was to find what Zoë and I had in common, a value-base that we both laid store by. Or perhaps I simply needed to respect Zoë for who she was, regardless of how that related to me. After all, *'He prayeth well who loveth well/ Both man and bird and beast'*! In other words, the most useful form of life is the one which values all constructive contributions, all manifestations of life and affirmation and development. Just as the Mariner has to open to that living truth and allow its meanings to become part of his abilities to act in the world (look what happens when he doesn't), I had to let go of ideas about my own worldview and see what it might mean to be Zoë in that situation. The implications of that I now find salutary: it is not for me to confuse particular abilities with human value. This was becoming a new, living, insight for me as opposed to being the rhetoric of my educational theory. I was certain in my own mind of my equality of regard for both of the girls and yet it seemed that my actions were allowing one girl to feel slighted. It is in

the explanation of this living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989b) that I capture what it means to be creating my own living educational theory. In which the realisation of my acting against my own espoused values spurs me to try harder, to sacrifice ego for the common good:

*'O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare
A spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unaware.'*

I had replied to Zoë:

'22.9.95. I am sorry you feel like this, Zoë. It must be really awful. I have thought very hard about what you have said. I am not aware of ignoring you at all and I know I value you and the work you are doing very much indeed. I enjoyed your Beowulf story very much. I know that you try hard and I am proud of you. I would like you to become proud of yourself. Come and talk to me and we'll see what we can do to help you to feel more settled here. How are you getting on at school do you think? Are you enjoying it? What do you like doing best? I must say I am enjoying teaching you and the class enormously.'

I see now that I may not have been as aware as I should, given what happened later.

Another girl, Vikki, had also written back in October 1995:

'I don't mean to be rude Miss ladlaw but esther alwas seems to answer questions and get the first turn in drama. Can me and Laura go first next time?'

I had replied:

'27.10.95. I cannot discuss what other girls do in your journal, Vikki, but thank you for your comments and I will think about them carefully. I don't see why you

shouldn't have a chance to go first next time we do Drama. Remind me, will you? You know what my memory's like!

I do not feel that such resentments are at all helpful to the learning environment I wanted to create in my classrooms. Through journals I had hoped to keep track of as much that was going on in the background as possible so that I might help to avert bitterness and inappropriate comparisons, to help to foster a spirit of a love of learning for its own sake. I thought after the 'Beowulf' project, that I had found ways of valuing individuals in such a way as to obviate further jealous friction. I am also perceiving in these words how important it is for my own educational development to recognise the emphasis I should place on living out my values more fully in my actions with pupils in the classroom rather than simply engaging in elegant descriptions of those values. This becomes particularly telling in the events which occurred towards the end of the Autumn term.

Marooned:

'Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion,
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.'

One morning Rebecca came to me in tears at the beginning of our lesson on Friday 12.1.96. In my journal that evening I wrote the following:

'I wonder how much of Rebecca's situation is my responsibility. That question again. How much is down to me, and how much is someone else's responsibility? I am the adult in the situation, I must bear a great deal of the responsibility for what is happening. However, I must not bear it all because that deprives the girls of becoming responsible for their own behaviour. Rebecca said that three of the girls, Zoë, Chloë and Lisa had been taking things from her bag and hiding them. They had given them back later, but Rebecca felt intimidated. Apparently all three of them had said that Rebecca always got more attention and everyone was praising her work. They were calling her a 'keener' (someone who is keen to work hard and please the teacher).

There is something wrong if any of the girls are feeling undervalued. How do I continue to support Rebecca's exceptional talent as a writer, whilst nurturing Zoë's creativity and sensitivity, Chloë's usual kindness to others and her empathy for those less creative than her, and Lisa's formidable originality? How can I help the girls to internalise the ipsative criterion when it comes to them judging their own work? This is not just about setting arbitrary standards linguistically, it's about helping the girls to find more appropriate ways of relating to themselves and each other.'

I felt there was a lack of moral impetus on my part at this stage. I didn't know what to do. I felt I had already done something wrong to have allowed this situation to have occurred at all. I decided, after talking to the girls quietly outside the classroom in a cosy corner, to tackle it head on. I knew that if I did that I was liable to unearth some uncomfortable issues but felt that it was a matter of fairness. I stopped the lesson fifteen minutes before the end and said that I was concerned that some girls didn't always seem to feel they were being treated fairly in my lessons. Did they trust me enough to talk about it? I felt it was really an important issue and I would value their opinions. Here are the notes I made that evening:

21.1.96. It was slow at first and no one spoke. I said: 'I am really sorry that some of you feel that you are not being treated fairly. Do you remember what I said in that letter I wrote to you which I gave to you in our first lesson? I said I wanted you to be able to tell me if there was anything happening that you thought was unfair. Well, I really meant it. I know it's difficult to say anything in public, and if you want you can write to me about it, but if you want to say anything now, please do, and I promise I will listen really carefully.' Then Zoë spoke. She said she thought I tried to be fair but sometimes I wasn't. Several girls nodded agreement. Jo said she felt that some of the girls were jealous of other girls and what they could do and not just in English and that was the problem. There was some nodding of heads at this point too. Discussion ranged from valuing people to valuing writing. I kept stressing that although I could see differences in writing, I was not aware of valuing girls differently. Would they be able to tell me if they felt I was breaking that rule? Could they write to me about it? They talked about giving constructive criticism to each other, both as learning partners

and friends. We talked about making sure that each girl felt that she had an equal chance to express herself, say in Drama and reading her homework aloud for example. We talked about giving each other a chance to speak and listening carefully to each other. With respect. At the end of the lesson Zoë, Lisa and Chloë came up to me and thanked me and then asked Rebecca if she wanted to eat lunch with them. Rebecca accepted with alacrity. I shall have to keep watching out for this. I don't want a classroom in which children feel resentment and bitterness and a sense of personal failure. I am also aware that not every child spoke to me at this point, which might suggest they did not feel able to do so. The reasons for this need exploration.

I have to learn always to be concerned about individuals and not believe that it is a job done once and for all time or shelved when it is inconvenient. If it is inconvenient then my priorities need careful examination again. To feel individuals are inconvenient is to go some way, it seems to me, towards objectifying people. I believe that to be anti-educational.

Moving On:

**'First Voice: 'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'**

**Second Voice: 'The air is cut away before
And closes from behind'.'**

I wrote the following in a letter to my Ph.D. supervisor, Jack Whitehead, on 28.1.96.:

Where I find the poem moving is in its moral complexity, its wrestling with deeply moral issues, trying to find livable solutions to a seemingly fragmented world. I feel pity for the Ancient Mariner, although I know what he has done is wrong, but I sense that his crime is somehow mine when I am reading the poem. That is its strength for me, that I can identify with the dilemma, and yet I can learn from the trauma resulting from the Mariner's action. It has a cleansing effect on me. Although it deals with evil, this poem, it is not evil itself. It sees evil and rejects it for the good. There is a wonderful moment when the Mariner looks over the side of the ship, his heart bitter and all natural good feeling suppressed. All his shipmates are dead because they too

have to pay the price for their weakness in supporting his murder of the albatross. The bird is hanging around his neck and the leaden weight is symbolic of his guilt of course. He is unable to pray, and then as he looks over the side, he sees the water snakes:

‘moving in tracks of shining light’,

all colours of the rainbow and then, quite suddenly he is seized by a good impulse:

*‘And a spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unawares.’*

I must recognise the power of the destructiveness represented by Zoë, Chloë and Lisa’s actions and find a way to turn their perspectives to a more educational route. I must enable them, if I can, to experience an environment which values a generosity of spirit towards others and a feeling of pride in their accomplishments. I believe the way forward here is to do with a loving integrity on my part in which I genuinely value each girl equally, not rhetorically, and expect only the very best from each one of them. An environment in which they are valued and not just for their curricular abilities.

Homecoming:

*‘Twas not those souls which fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest.’*

In our lesson on 5.12.95. I talked about what they might do for the rest of the project on the poem. With ‘Beowulf’ they had worked on self-chosen assignments, the brief being simply that they had to find at least two forms of representation (one of them to be writing of some sort) to show their understanding of the legend which would be presented at a special Ceremony of Celebration. Many of them had expressed interest in doing something along similar lines for ‘The Ancient Mariner’. Integral to this former project had been processes of evaluation in which they had articulated the educational standards of judgement by which they had wanted their presentations to be judged. I

did not feel I had explained this process in such a way that enabled them to integrate their growing understanding about the legend with ways about how to internalise some worthwhile criteria by which to judge it. Some of them, like Lisa, had written in her journal:

'I don't understand why we're doing this. Can't you just tell us whether it's any good or not? Isn't that what you're supposed to do? I'm not being rude but I just don't understand.'

She was not alone in such insights. Questions of personal responsibility seem to me to be so crucial to the learning process, but I need constant reminding about how such questions can most educationally manifest themselves in living relationships with others. I think this is to do with the forms of my educative relationships, what I am calling elsewhere their morphology, for example the interactive journals, the learning partners, the educational standards of judgement, their presentations of their understanding. I seem to be searching for a form in which educational questions can be opened up to the learners in order to improve the quality of learning for us all. However, I do find it easier to be conscious of the significance of asking questions like: 'How much of this is to do with me and how much belongs to someone else?' when engaging in archetypal literature like 'The Ancient Mariner' which deals so powerfully with such values. The poem's values themselves provide us with a role-model for the classroom. For example, when the Ancient Mariner says to the Hermit:

'Oh shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!

The hermit crossed his brow.

'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say -

What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mind was wrenched

With a woful agony,

Which forced me to tell my tale;

And then it left me free.'

the Hermit refuses to absolve the Mariner of his guilt because he must do it himself. His punishment is in fact the reliving of his failure to recognise the importance of taking personal responsibility for his actions in his eternal recounting of his own story, so that he will come to understand what his failure means. And in our classroom, the girls and I must wrestle with issues of personal responsibility if we are to come to understand our place in the world and our potential within it, both as individuals and as members of a community.

On 17.11.95. I wrote the following in my diary:

"I can perceive parallels in the situation in which the Mariner finds himself towards the end of the poem in what he has to learn, and the integrated nature of the values underpinning my practice and what I have to teach in the Year Seven classroom.

I am on the same ground here in terms of values and significance in the notion of a living educational theory which I am developing with these words. I cannot usefully articulate my own educational theory unless it is a living one because of the nature of the values underpinning it. My own educational theory lives in the values as they become explicit in my practice over time. It is therefore never complete. It is much more than a snapshot and much less than the truth, but it is living. As I write these words I draw together my past, I describe and explain the present and out of that I try to craft the future. Like the Mariner at the end of the poem I try to understand what I experience and capture it in order to improve the quality of life for myself and others. That is my particular quest: to know my own educational development that I might cohere experience with wisdom in the service of education and humanity.

Similarly, I want the girls to come to know their own educational development, to evolve a perspective about the meanings they can make from what they do. Because of that I won't allow them to use the words 'good' and 'bad' as descriptors of quality about their own and others' work. I have tried to explain that 'good' and 'bad' mean

nothing unless they are set against something else which is living for them and come alive for us in their representation. Thus a 'good' piece of work for one girl's writing might be more usefully described as 'accurate' if she is normally careless with syntax, or it might mean 'highly descriptive' if she is challenging her own vocabulary and ways of evoking atmosphere for example. These descriptions embody as well as explain their own educational development just as the evolving of educational standards of judgement in my own thesis represents a useful articulation of my own educational development. I consider it useful because it enables me to communicate what is of value in my work and to improve what I am doing.

In the same spirit, what will it mean in my classroom for girls to understand that asking such questions about formulating their own criteria really matters? That they might be able to help themselves in such ways to live good lives? 'How much of this is down to me?' 'How can I improve what I am doing?' 'How can we help each other?' When the Mariner is reminiscing about his experiences he says at one point:

*This soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.*

*O sweeter than the marriage feast
'Tis sweeter far to me
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company.'*

This passionate avowal of his human need (rendered archetypal through the aesthetic power of the poem) for collaboration towards the good always stirs in me a sense of the need to bring such an enabling process into the classroom: I believe that there must be a way that I can integrate the values of loving integrity in my educative relationships with the girls with my insights into the poem in ways which will enable us to begin to take greater responsibility for our own learning and ultimately for ourselves as we

work together on something we feel is of intrinsic value. I believe that encouraging the girls to integrate their learning about the curriculum aspects of my teaching responsibilities with ways in which we can evaluate our own learning will serve this purpose. It's a matter of finding a better way than I managed with 'Beowulf'. I want us to be able to judge our own work, not by criteria which are disconnected from others' sense of worth and purpose, but are sufficiently our own to render them personally true and meaningful, giving us as individuals and as a group, something we can build on and points from which we can judge how far we have come. I want us all to be able to stand and tell our own stories of our own lives, not as the Ancient Mariner does as a punishment, but as a process of self-empowerment. It seems to me that developing our own educational standards of judgement, both as individuals and as members of a group, will help in this process, and that the poem can give us all clues about the worthwhileness of such an undertaking. I want each one of us to become the helmsman steering through the ice.

On 5.1.96. we got together as a group to discuss what would be the criteria we could use as a class in judging the quality of the work being produced in preparation for the final presentations.

Zoë: *'We've got to understand it, haven't we? I mean, whatever anyone does, we have to understand it..'*

Maira: *'Brilliant, yes. Can we think of a way of describing that - what Zoë said?'*

Rebecca: *'Understandability, Miss!'*

(general laughter)

Maira: *'Any advance on that? 'Understandability' sounds a bit clumsy, but you're right, Rebecca, you've got the idea.'*

Jo: *'Is it comprehensible or something?'*

Maira: *'Comprehensibility, yes. O.K., then, are we agreed? What you produce has to be comprehensible. We have to understand it. Well done Zoë, Rebecca and Jo on that one.'*

We went on to discuss several more ways of judging the work. Here's what we came

up with:

- 1) Comprehensibility: the work has to be understandable. It has to make sense.
- 2) Carefulness: it has to be the result of hard work and attention to detail.
- 3) Collaboration: it has to show evidence of working with (an) other(s) in some way, however small. (Learning partners can help here.)

Then the girls got together with their learning partners to discuss the standards of judgement by which they wanted to evaluate their own work. Helen wrote about her puppet show:

*'Creativity: Like the way we made the box and painted the backgrounds.
Difference in voices: each character has a separate voice so you can recognise him.
How much effort did we put into the show?
Whether people found it entertaining.
The skill of how we used the puppets.'*

Hannah wrote:

Five things.

- 1) *I want to be judged on creativity, meaning has it got some good phrases and if my writing comes from the heart.*
- 2) *Have I seemed to understand the story, meaning did I seem to make it up?*
- 3) *Is the story a comprehensible one?*
- 4) *Was the story an interesting story, meaning gripping?*
- 5) *Is it an informative story? Do I seem to have filled you in on what the story is about?*

Rebecca wrote:

'I would like my work to be judged on how creative it is in the way of how well I have structured my vocabulary and if they find I have really tried with it and included

effort into the project. I would also like to be judged on how artistic this is and if they think I've presented it well and put effort into the illustrations and story. Also I'd like to be judged on how accurate it is by my punctuation and grammar and if it is well put together. However, I would it to be judged on the overall creativity of my piece of work.'

Each girl set her own criteria and then set about finishing off her work in preparation for the presentation which they knew would be videoed.

Telling the story:

**'I pass like night from land to land;
I have strange powers of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.'**

On 28.1.96. the class came into the room after Assembly, in a rush. They were talking, shouting, asking for last minute advice from me and from each other, reminding themselves of the order of presentation (which we had done through volunteers the day before) and rifling through bags for scripts, diaries, pictures, etc.. Costumes flew out of bags, tables were moved, books fetched, O.H.P. set up, bags dumped in a heap, chairs arranged, smiling, anxious faces, pleas of 'Do I have to go first, Miss? Kelly says she doesn't mind.' And 'yes I bloody-well do!' (from Kelly!) (N.B. I'm afraid that just made me laugh. I couldn't do the traditional English teacher-thing of getting worked up about register and tone! I was quite pleased actually that Kelly was not going to be put upon by anyone else. I simply frowned at her with a smile on my face and she grinned back.) Katie came to me. She had dressed her hair in a different way from usual and her face and clothes sparkled with careful attention. My heart ached for her as I recognised how much this meant to her. 'I'm so nervous, Miss, I'm sure I'm going to get it all wrong.' I reassured her with a brief hug and turned to Michelle who was to start.

Michelle's confidence seemed to surprise quite a few of us. She spoke out clearly and distinctly, her Mariner's Diary. She dramatised her reading and I looked round the faces

and saw gripped attention. I had given girls copies of their own criteria and at least those of three other girls' they chose themselves. Rebecca's work was to be judged by Zoë, Lisa and Hannah. Rebecca had opted to judge Hannah, Jo, Lisa and Zoë's work. I was pleased with these choices as they suggested that the girls might have found constructive ways of working together. I was interested to see how the balance between concern for the work and their personal relationships was going to evolve in this setting.

I advised the class to read the criteria as the presentation was in progress to help them to make their final judgements which would take a written form after discussion with the presenter.

Zoë decided to read aloud parts of the Mariner's Diary she had written. She was dressed in breeches and a ragged shirt, held together with a faded leather belt. She had teastained and burnt the edges of the paper to give the diary the appearance of great age, her writing on it florid and tapering. She limped into the middle of the floor space.

'I am Josiah Barnaby', she began. 'My story is very old. I haven't finished telling it yet. I've tried very hard to tell the truth but my memory is not what it was. I have not had a happy life. I am not a happy man.'

And we were listening! I looked around at the faces of the girls. I saw what I believe to have been admiration, interest, warmth, and understanding. Katie looked at me and smiled her approval. Rebecca seemed to be attending very carefully.

'I did something very wrong,' Josiah Barnaby continued. 'It was a long time ago but it still haunts me. I am a guilty man. I will read you something from my diary. Then you will understand. I want you to understand.'

She then read us some extracts from the papers she was holding. Here is her final entry. I present it here in its written form because I think it gets closer to the originality of Zoë's text:

'Sometimes I fall asleep. not often becaus when I do I dream about the albetross. We haled it in God's name. it was a good bird But I didnt like it. i killed it. i've had an unhappy life but at least I had a life. I took the albatrosses life away from him. I wish I hadnt done it!'

She spoke the lines with such sadness. She bowed her head and looked bereft. There was silence and then we all clapped with gusto. I feel she had captured something of the pathos and the regret of the poem. She wanted her work to be judged on the following criteria:

- 1) Originality: does the work remind you of something else? It shouldnt do.*
- 2) Creative: is it using the ideas in the poem in an imagintive way?*
- 3) Belivable: do you belive in the work?*
- 4) Atmospheric: do I make you feel you are there with the ancent mariner.*

Here is a selection of the comments the girls made straightaway.

Laura-Lee: *'It was spooky, I thought!'*

Rosemary: *'Yeah, it made me feel funny. I thought you were going to cry at one point.'*

Zoë: *'So did I, actually.'*

(laughter)

Maira: *'I thought it was very touching indeed, Zoë. Thank you.'*

Rebecca: *'I felt I was there. You were so convincing.'*

Hannah: *'What made you do it like that?'*

Zoë: *'I don't know really. I thought of the name and it sounded old and it just came from there. I don't know.'*

Emily: *'I think it's really original the way you did it. I haven't heard anything like that before.'*

Kelly: *'Nor have I. It was great!'*

Zoë: *'Thanks.'*

Zoë looked pleased with the responses and when she sat down she looked over at me and smiled with obvious pleasure. I wrote in my diary that evening:

'When Zoë had finished her presentation, I really felt like celebrating with her. She seemed so happy to be herself. She looked around at others who smiled at her in affirmation. I watched her on and off for the rest of the presentations and she was smiling quite a lot. More than usual I would say. But the smiling wasn't at others, it also seemed to be for nothing in particular. She simply seemed happy. Can I suppose that she had achieved something she wanted to achieve? That she felt good about being Zoë? I hope so. That does seem to be very important because she had achieved something really worthwhile. Her characterisation showed a genuine empathy for the plight of another. The attention to detail - in her dress, in her manner, in the form of writing, in her body-language, in her tone of voice, in the pathos of her words - exceeds anything in terms of insight that I have seen from her before. There seems to me to have been a greater synthesis between her sensitivity and her actions. She has such insight and I believe that today she grew a little in exercising this talent.'

When it came to Rebecca's turn she stood up with the book she had made.

'I decided to make a book, an illustrated story of The Ancient Mariner's voyage. I will show you the drawings I have done and read you out my favourite parts. They are my favourite parts because they bring the poem alive for me again and I feel as if I have made it all up myself. I really enjoyed doing this. I drew an embroidery on the front cover in gold pen to make it look special.'

She then showed us the cover before returning to the centre of the semi-circle and opening it up to read:

'T'was early in the morning and the ice was sprinkled on each leaf as if the angels had flown down in the night and showered each branch with their jewels. And each spider-web more divine than any tapestry, sparkled in the hazy sunshine and the

golden leaves layered a carpet of joy on the ground.'

I find the originality of this opening stunning. It is not in the poem in any way directly, but she has captured the mood of optimism and reverence very clearly indeed. She continued:

'The darkness under the tree was immense, for the branches bowed down like servants before a queen...However, on the old man spoke, his voice as fluent as the rivers themselves.'

Her imagery here is awe-inspiring. The idea of juxtaposing 'darkness' with 'immense' takes real insight, aesthetic sensitivity and poetic originality. The suggestion of reverence is continued through her simile: *'bowed down like servants before a queen'*. For each major event in the poem, she has illustrated the scene, each paragraph is decorated and its first letter designed like a stained-glass window. At the end of her presentation she spoke about what it had felt like to do the project:

'This is the hardest work I have ever done. It took me ages. There were times when I didn't know whether I would finish it in time. Sometimes I sat up until after eleven at night and I got told off because I should have been in bed. I wanted to finish it because it was important to me and I loved doing it, although I got nervous about not finishing it. I have only written up to the point where we read it all together in class because Miss Laidlaw said that was all we needed to do, but it's incomplete now and I am going to finish it all. I'm really glad I did this project and presented my work today because I think this is the best work I've ever done!'

I looked around the class, and especially at Zoë, Chloë, and Lisa and their faces were wreathed in smiles and the clapping started spontaneously. Just as the time when I had read the poem to them weeks before I felt like crying but suppressed the emotion for the same reasons as I had then. This was Rebecca's moment not mine. But again, she caught me wiping away a tear and smiled so sweetly and warmly at me, I felt a rush of love for her and for the whole class. Something magical was happening again that day.

I felt the storm which had hit us in previous weeks was fading away even as the presentations developed. Katie's was the last to be videoed. Afterwards she came up to me and said: *'Oh, Miss, I was really good, wasn't I?'* her face beaming with delight. The hug I gave her this time was not quite so brief!

On 2.2.96. Rebecca, Chloë, Zoë, Lisa and Hannah sat together to judge Rebecca's work after most of them had looked at Lisa's. I videoed their responses:

Zoë: *I thought it was brilliant, Becks. I thought your pictures were amazing. I wish I could draw like that.*

Rebecca: *Was it creative, do you think?*

Chloë: *Course it was. I liked the storm picture best. It looks like fingers from the sky.*

Hannah: *Yeah, I thought that.*

Zoë: *I thought you read out a bit too much, though, but it was good.*

Lisa: *Good? (laugh) We're not allowed to say that word, are we?*

Moir: *(from behind camera) No, you're not!*

Zoë: *I mean it was interesting. I thought you had tried really hard as well.*

Hannah: *I thought overall it was very creative, because your pictures really went with the story and you had not copied the poem. It was definitely in your own words.*

Chloë: *Yeah and you had made up bits which fitted. I liked it, but I think it went on a bit.*

Lisa: *I didn't. I liked all of it. You did something a bit like mine with the storyline, but I wrote it as a poem. They were really different really.*

Conclusion:

'Farewell farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.'

I find that 'The Ancient Mariner' focuses and stretches my moral insight and enables me to live some of the values out in the classroom which seem to be linked to improvement in children's learning. This is not to say it is the only piece of literature

which has an ennobling effect on my practice, but I do believe it is the most cogent one. I have written this because I wanted to explain the connections between my desire for beauty, truth and goodness in the classroom with my pupils and its articulation as my own living educational theory. I wanted to explain why this poem affects me so strongly, and how it enables me to connect more directly with children as I help them to improve the quality of their learning about English. The poem also enables me to learn more about myself and the processes of educational development which I am undergoing. It has played a significant part in the uncovering of my own ethics and ontology, and thus it helps me as a teacher-researcher to remember how much I have still to learn from my pupils, from the world around me and from my own reflections on the processes I engage in with others. This paper is an attempt to account for my own educational values as revealed through my practice over time. It is a rendition of my own living educational theory which finds great significance in devising situations in which individuals can articulate their own educational standards of judgement as I help them to improve their learning about English.

N.B. On 14.6.96. Zoë and I had the following conversation which I wrote about in my journal that evening. We had been discussing co-operation in relation to putting on scenes from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

Zoë: *'You make me think, Miss.'*

Moira: *'What about?'*

Zoë: *'About the world. I was thinking about Bosnia last night, and there's Northern Ireland and people killing each other all over the world. All these adults telling us things and then not doing them. You tell us we should try to be nice to each other and it's really hard isn't it? But when it works, it's great. I love working in this class in English. Why can't the world be like this class?'*

Moira: *'Perhaps our job is to try to make the whole world like this class.'*

Zoë: *'How can we do that?'*

Moira: *'I don't know, Zoë, but I have to keep on working with the class to make it the best class it can possibly be. All of us together. Do you see why I bother so much? Somewhere I believe that the world can really be like this. And I know you look*

around and it seems to make no sense, but then bits of it like this class, they do make sense sometimes. And it's fun, isn't it?

Zoë: 'I love being in this class. I think we're learning how to be nice to each other as well as English. And I'm starting to see what it means.'

Zoë bowls me over with her humanity and insight. That last bit about understanding what it means strikes me as one of the clearest reflections back to me of the values that I am now quite consciously bringing into the classroom. I know, again, that I have not 'cracked it' with Zoë but for those few moments I think we shared something educational. It is possible, of course, that she was simply seeking my approval in this conversation, but I believe that we were building from something powerful and I capture that here as part of my living educational theory. Thank Heavens for the 'Ancient Mariner', Action Research, and a context in which working with children really seems to have the potential to help us all to lead better lives.'

Introduction

I am a teacher-researcher who is making three original claims to educational knowledge in this Ph.D. resubmission as I offer you an account of my own educational development:

- 1) The development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships has educational use-value in judging the quality of my educational practice; (the term 'aesthetic morphology' I will explain on pages 40 - 42.)
- 2) The analysis of my own fiction is an ontological guide to my effectiveness in turning my educational values into action.
- 3) I am developing my own living educational theory (see below) (Whitehead, 1989b) through a synthesis of my ontological, aesthetic and ethical concerns.

Before I go on to outline for you the way in which this Introduction is structured I feel it is important that I make clear to you what I am understanding by the term 'living educational theory' mentioned in my third claim to knowledge above. I am adopting Whitehead's (1989b) idea that educational theory is being constituted by the descriptions and explanations of individual practitioners as they ask questions of the kind, 'How can I improve my practice?' In the term 'living educational theory' the living dimension emphasises the developmental nature both of coming to know and of the values underpinning actions in the attempt to improve practice. The form of words - living - educational - theory - gives me the ultimate freedom to create something educationally original, generative and inspirational in a form which does justice to the

complexity and uniqueness of my own enquiry. I present this thesis as my own living educational theory in the sense that it describes and explains my own educational development as I try to improve the quality of learning with my students and pupils. I will go into more detail about 'living educational theory' throughout the thesis and will end with one expression of it. You may have already encountered one expression of it in The General Prologue.

I am now going to outline for you the way in which I have structured this Introduction. This thesis contains three distinct themes whose interweaving is one of the educational purposes of my research. These themes are: the analysis of the significance of my educative relationships in my educational practice; the educational standards of judgement by which I wish this thesis and my practice to be judged; and the synthesis of the four dimensions of my educational practice. (See the section in this Introduction about the Epilogues on pages 45-46.) The themes are synthesised through my own educational development and articulated finally through my own living educational theory. This Introduction is structured in such a way as to reflect the dialectical nature of these areas of interest, however. It is later in the thesis that synthesis becomes more appropriate as I seek to explain my own educational development as an articulation of my own living educational theory.

Structure of this Introduction:

First I will take you through what I mean within my first claim to educational knowledge by the term 'aesthetic morphology'.

Second I will offer you an overview of the four Parts of the thesis with their Prologues and Epilogues, with both a description of their structure,

and a description of the ways in which I would like you to view how I am using the term 'educational standards of judgement' throughout the thesis.

Third your attention is drawn to the significance I bring to the overarching importance of 'good quality' dialogue within this thesis, as this is an aspect which concerns me throughout the text.

Fourth I highlight three educational standards of judgement which I wish to act as perspectives by which to judge the whole of the work you are reading. These are a) 'self-evaluation', b) 'the educational nature of this thesis' and c) 'rationality'.

Fifth I go into detail about other educational standards of judgement under the heading of 'Representation and Meaning'. I see particular educational standards of judgement being in epistemological relationship to the ways in which I can represent them in this text. These educational standards of judgement are headed under: 5.1.1) experimental forms; 5.1.2. systematic enquiry made public; 5.1.3. locating my own experience; 5.2.1. the significance of the writing-up stage; 5.2.2. development of research foci; 5.2.3. dialectical forms; 5.3.1. use-value; 5.3.2. truth and concern for individuals; 5.3.3. ethics; 5.3.4. authenticity; and 5.3.4a) ontological authenticity. These are further to be understood from within the three claims to educational knowledge which I made on the first page of this Introduction, all of which are varying expressions of my own educational development.

Sixth I outline in what ways I consider that the aesthetic morphology is an expression of an immanent dialectic. By this I mean that the use-value I make of the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships can only be fully understood in its representation as emerging through my practice over time.

Seventh I state again the three original claims to educational knowledge which this thesis represents in order to show in what ways an aesthetic appreciation of these three claims is central to an understanding of their educational focus in this thesis and in the practice represented within it.

First, then, the 'aesthetic morphology'. What is it?

First: An Aesthetic Standard of Judgement: 'The Aesthetic Morphology'.

When I started out on my research I was concerned with developing an aesthetic standard of judgement by which I could test the validity of my educative relationships with Teacher Education students. I would like to introduce you to a central idea in my thesis - an aesthetic morphology. Although I realise the difficulty you might have in comprehending a definition without a practical example at this early stage, I hope one will nevertheless enable you to read with increasing understanding as you encounter descriptions and explanations of its practical application later in the text together with some theoretical contextualisation.

'Aesthetic':

The term 'aesthetic' is problematic. Diffey (1986) writes:

'At different times 'aesthetic' has been variously identified with one of three main ideas: the perceptual, the beautiful and the artistic.' (p 5)

Under the term 'aesthetic' I infer all three of Diffey's spheres: the perceptual, the beautiful and the artistic. I understand aesthetic experience as that which links all of the above. One of the aims of this thesis is to

show the ways in which the linking between perception, beauty and a work of art constitute many of my educational aspirations. In this thesis I also perceive in terms of my educational practice, the aesthetic to be concerned with the links I can make between the good, the true and the beautiful. (See the Epilogue to Part One in particular for more details about these links.)

Diffey goes on to express that much writing on aesthetics does not clearly demarcate meanings of the term and concludes:

'We should regard the term [as one that] extends thought by pointing to the new and not as yet understood territory. The idea is that by means of inadequately understood expressions such as 'aesthetic experience' our language is leading us to new possibilities of experience of which philosophy is not yet fully cognisant.' (p.11)

This thesis claims to make original contributions to educational knowledge, but I accept that explorations of the aesthetic can help me in my educational life to gain access to new realms of experience and understanding with which to make sense of my educative relationships, processes and ways of knowing. These ideas are shown in their practical contexts throughout the thesis.

'Morphology':

By the term '**morphology**' I infer the particular forms and structures which my educative relationships take in practice; I am referring for example, to the development of my educative relationships with students and pupils as we communicate in one-to-one dialogues, group discussions, journals,

and through the analysis of video and aural recordings. In addition the form of our discourse is also framed by seminars, lessons, homework, assignments, curriculum and institutions. The term 'morphology' also has linguistic connotations to do with the forms and structures of language used to express an idea.

An aesthetic morphology:

An aesthetic morphology, then, combines a way of looking at the dialectic between the form and content of a variety of educational processes and situations, of relationships and ways of knowing - in ways which emphasise the beauty, the resultant perceptions and purposes of them all (purposes being allied to the art of the process). I outline a process in the thesis in which the content and development of the educative relationships I have with pupils and teachers are analysed and understood aesthetically. As my research has developed I have begun to recognise that this aesthetic standard itself, when applied to my educational life, contains aspects - ontology, ethics and knowledge - which, when I subject them to analysis and subsequent synthesis, can enhance my practice and the educational validity of my work. It has been my growing understanding of what constitutes an educational aesthetic standard that has revealed to me that I need to be accountable for the ways in which I can represent my research if I wish it to be judged as authentic. This thesis, in short, seeks to provide a description and explanation of my educational development and living educational theory as I conduct action research enquiries into my educative relationships with students and pupils with the help of a developing diagnostic and evaluative tool - an aesthetic morphology.

Second: An Overview of this Thesis

I would now like to take you through a description of the thesis in terms of its structure and the ways in which I am integrating a developmental approach to the educational standards of judgement by which I am inviting you to judge it.

a) Structure:

In this section of the Introduction I am also concerned to give you an overview of the thesis. In it I will detail the ways in which this thesis has been structured in order to enable you to see clearly the development of ideas from beginning to end, and perceive them in their context. Showing you something of my work with a more recent Year Seven group in The General Prologue represents some of my core educational values more appropriately than would have been the case in earlier drafts of this opening to the thesis. Eisner (1993) writes about representation:

'[it]...is the process of transforming the contents of consciousness into a public form so that they can be stabilized, inspected, edited, and shared with others. Representation is what confers a publicly social dimension to cognition.' (p.6)

He also goes on to write about the effects of representation on meanings and I will address these issues at length in the fifth section of this Introduction.

Part One entitled: 'In search of my own educational standards of judgement: creating my own living educational theory' was written in 1993. It is in two sections. Instead of the more traditional literature search,

I try in the first section to show how I have come to locate my work within the individually-orientated action research paradigm. I do this by revealing a parallel between educational research literature and my own educational experiences from my PGCE year to the present. The second section deals with a case-study of my work with one of the PGCE students, Sarah. (1992-1993). I reveal the educational significance of my work with her through flashbacks to Initial Teacher Education students Zac and Justine from the previous two years. First, I show how my facilitation of students conducting action enquiries has changed, and secondly I reveal my own educational development. I concentrate at length on an aesthetic standard of judgement through which I am working out the value of what I am doing. This section finishes with Sarah's final assignment and her own comments on it.

Part Two entitled: 'In Search of Synthesis' was written shortly after Part One in 1993. It consists of two letters, one written to me unsolicited by CC (a Masters degree student from 1992 -1993), and the other, my response. In her letter CC challenges me to open up a process of dialogue about certain aspects of my research which I had given her to read. My response attempts a more authentic synthesis of some of my fundamental educational values.

Part Three entitled: 'Echoes: Returning to the Golden Tapestry' was completed in 1994. It draws on the significance of the work in the previous two parts and makes a claim that a synthesis between the ethics, aesthetics and ontology of my practice in education is creating my own living educational theory. Within this presentation I show how I use fictional forms as an ontological basis for my explanation.

Part Four entitled: 'My educational knowledge: creating my own living educational theory' was written in 1996. It is the conclusion to the thesis, and consists of an adapted article presented at the 1996 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference about my work with some Year Nine girls as I helped them to articulate their own educational standards of judgement about the work they were doing in English. It is interpolated by comments which point towards the extent of my educational development in the thesis and ends with part of the paper I included in full in The General Prologue as an expression of my own living educational theory. It ends with conclusions about the educational validity of the text as a whole.

Each Part has, in this resubmission, a Prologue and an Epilogue. The function of the Prologues is to alert the reader to what s/he is about to read, particularly from the point of view of how the subsequent Part represents my own educational development from within an action research perspective.

The Epilogues are concerned with drawing out the educational significance of my own development in order to avoid the excessive interpretation required on behalf of the reader which was pointed out after the previous submission. They will also begin to develop an evaluation of each part through the criteria I am developing for judgement described in this Introduction.

Broadly, there are four dimensions which characterise my research into my educational practice. These are concerned with my aesthetics, ethics,

ontology and educational knowledge. Each of the four Parts can be seen specifically as emphasising different strands. (Part One deals largely with my aesthetics, Part Two with my ethics, Part Three with my ontology and Part Four with my educational knowledge.) This is not to suggest that each dimension is not present in each of the Parts and I do not wish to falsify this account by giving a simplistic overview through an analysis which suggests that each dimension is divisible from the other in my practice with students and pupils. Indeed the meanings I am giving to, and inferring from, aesthetics and knowledge, rest in their synthesis of other aspects. This thesis however, is making claims to knowledge, and what renders the knowledge educational is its reflection on, and analysis of, the ways I connect each aspect to each other aspect in order to improve the quality of learning in my own educational development and with my pupils.

In these Prologues and Epilogues I use insights derived from 'The Ancient Mariner' to enable me to explain some of my core educational values. To this end I do not qualify my interpretations of the poem through the insights of others because this thesis is not about my literary understanding of the poem, but a description and explanation of my educative relationships and educational development through my developing ontological insights. (See pages 85 - 87 in this Introduction for a description of the ways in which I am using the term ontological in this thesis and also the Epilogue to Part Three.) The insights I derive from the poem are metaphorical. They are my insights and that is the point. I am not trying to convince you about the poem, but simply using it as a metaphorical device to illuminate the four dimensions of my educational practice (see above). It would therefore not be helpful for me to deflect the

focus of this text through an intense literary analysis of the poem as I go along.

b) Developing educational standards of judgement:

Apart from a thesis which describes and explains a series of educational processes, I am offering you here a text which both extrapolates and develops a series of criteria by which it can be judged. Thus in Part One, I am consciously seeking the standards of judgement by which I can validate my educational processes. In Part Two I show something of the fruits of such an endeavour although it is not, to my mind, specific enough in that area and the Epilogue explores the reasons why. In Part Three, however, I recognise the importance of continuing to interrogate the standards of judgement I am applying to my practice and seek a greater synthesis within the practice and its analysis. This process continues in Part Four and becomes particularly significant as I enable a group of Year Nine English students to develop their own educational standards of judgement in their self-chosen projects as part of their own action enquiries into how they can improve the quality of their work in our English lessons. Then as a result of the learning I did during that process, I analyse what happens later with a class of Year Seven pupils as they seek to understand more about 'The Ancient Mariner' poem we are studying and evaluate their own learning about it. The processes of articulating the developmental educational standards of judgement, both in this text and in my practice, characterise my own educational development.

I would like to explain at this point the two reasons for the length of my thesis. First it is a representation of my own educational development which has occurred in three distinct areas of research - Initial Teacher

Education, Continuing Professional Development and teaching English in the classroom - over six years. Secondly in this resubmission I didn't want to lose any of the richness as I added a more substantial theoretical and explanatory contextualisation for the enquiries undertaken.

Third: The Quality of Dialogue and the Validity of this Text

In this third part of the Introduction I am now going to offer you a more detailed analysis of the links I would like you to make between the quality of dialogue and the educational validity of this text. This is in order for you to understand the links between my educational standards of judgement and the processes of education I engage in.

I will now outline the standards of judgement through which I believe this thesis is best understood and through which its educational validity is focused. By the term educational 'validity' I mean the educational quality of the procedures (usually dialogue) I encourage within the learning process. Bernstein (1983) outlines an approach to dialogue which:

'emphasizes the type of mutuality, sharing, respect and equality required or genuine dialogue, and the principle of dialogue is universalized when he [Gadamer] endorses the principle of freedom that encompasses all of humanity.' (p.190)

In terms of this thesis I wish the validity of my claims to educational development and explanation to be judged (amongst other aspects to be highlighted in this Introduction) by the extent to which qualities such as mutuality (Parts Two and Three), sharing and respect (Parts One, Two, Three and Four) and equality in the pursuit of dialogue (Parts One, Three,

and Four), are evolved within my educative relationships.

In this thesis I put forward the claim that my educative relationships are central to the quality of the learning experiences we (my students and I) share. I see my educative relationships as developmental and not static, just as I perceive education itself to be a developmental process. I believe that the quality of my educative relationships hinges upon the quality of dialogue I can encourage. As I wish this thesis to be judged as a contribution to educational knowledge, I think that the actions, writing, reflections and conclusions put forward could be deemed valid or not in terms of the extent to which I can describe and explain how I am contributing to the educational development of myself and my students and pupils through the quality of dialogue I encourage. Griffiths (1995) makes a similar point (although she uses the term 'conversation' as one which denotes continuing interpretation by a researcher of a text or theory - in this case feminism and post-modernism - rather than simply with another human being). She writes:

'The conversation that educational researchers have...must be a continuing one, a conversation which informs ongoing research rather than produces yet another method or methodology to choose or reject.' (p.233)

I want my educative conversations with my students and pupils to have this generative potential.

Fourth: Educational Standards of Judgement

This fourth section of the Introduction is concerned with establishing the

links between aspects of this thesis and ways of judging its educational validity.

Because this thesis is concerned with evolving processes of evaluation within the work itself, I want to emphasise right from the beginning, the necessity of formulating standards of judgement which are evolving as the work itself evolves. I will elaborate upon this in the section on dialectical forms (5.2.3) as the notion of developmental standards of judgement is more appropriately dealt with when discussing the potential for transformation in an educational process. The first three standards of judgement in the following exposition: a) 'self evaluation', b) 'the educational nature of this thesis', and c) 'rationality', are ones which should permeate every aspect of this thesis: they are the lenses through which I seek to make meanings. The standards of judgement discussed under Representation and Meaning in this Introduction should be understood as being in a dialectical relationship to their representation in this thesis and as influential on the emerging knowledge.

a)

Self evaluation:

Clarke et al (1993) have this to say about action research reports, of which I am claiming this thesis is one:

'a) the aims [of the report] will have to be made explicit, if only in retrospect;

b) (most importantly) that the action researcher has an obligation to articulate the criteria upon which their own work is to be judged; i.e. to

inform the reader about how to read (or view) it.' (p. 491)

They go on to say:

'We must avoid making yet another set of 'technical' prescriptions as a means of controlling others' research, as opposed to addressing the questions of value and validity raised by our efforts at researching our own practice.' (p.491)

I am writing this thesis as well at a time when there seems to be little agreement about the nature of what constitutes validity or truth in educational research. Uncertainty seems to be the only certainty (Bernstein, 1983; Kincheloe, 1991; Kemmis, 1992; Lincoln, 1993). In this thesis I am not trying to reveal consensus as a necessary parameter for validity in the work I am doing. Indeed, I am not so much troubled by the notion that different schools of thought cannot agree about what constitutes truth and validity in educational research, than by the idea that one school of thought attributes to itself right and truth against all-comers.

b)

The educational nature of this thesis:

I want to stress the educational nature of this thesis from the outset. In a symposium paper for the 1994 American Educational Research Association Conference in New Orleans, Munby (1994), states that the symposium aims to reveal the significance of distinguishing between:

'the systemic functions - 'the forms and structures, processes and procedures, put in place to carry out the business of schooling' - and the

educative purposes of schooling.' (abstract)

Munby goes on to say that teacher education has overemphasized the former at the expense of the latter. In so doing, he argues, the educational quality is necessarily limited, and does not enable a process of enquiry through which people come to understand what they are able to achieve in the name of education. I take distinct issue with the view, however, when Fenstermacher (1992), for example, says that despite the overemphasis on the 'systemics' of learning in initial teacher-education the place of universities in teacher education should be diminished. I believe that sections of this thesis show the educative value of myself as a university tutor playing an important role in the educational development of my students. Through their subsequent professional development, they in turn are able to offer descriptions and explanations of how they have helped to improve the quality of learning with their pupils. The cyclical nature of the teacher as learner (see McNiff, 1993) is a crucial one at the heart of the learning processes of myself and my students revealed in this thesis. I develop this theme at length in the Epilogue to Part Four.

c)

Rationality:

My aim in this Introduction is to acquaint you with the areas of research which you will encounter in this thesis in such a way to convince you of the rationality of the conclusions. MacIntyre (1990) says that in coming to conclusions within a university there must be:

'a...general academic consensus, both within and between disciplines, as

to what is to be accounted as at least some sort of relevant reason for upholding or advancing any particular conclusion.' (p.7)

Thomists would contend that:

'it is in moving from sense experience to true judgement that the mind first perfects itself.' (MacIntyre, 1990: 166)

The whole of my first claim in this thesis - *'the development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships has educational use-value in judging the quality of my educational practice,'* is predicated upon the belief that bringing the power of reflection to my intuitions and actions will improve the educational quality of those actions. I would therefore ask you to judge this text's validity partly by the degree to which I reveal that the processes described and explained in this thesis have been rationally defensible ones. I would contend that the degree of rationality runs parallel to the quality of my educational development.

MacIntyre (1990) concludes that universities should become places of:

'constrained disagreement, of imposed participation in conflict in which a central responsibility of higher education would be to initiate students into conflict,' (p.231)

rather than into *'unconstrained agreements.'* (p.230)

He reasons that:

'systematically conducted controversy would itself contribute to systematically conducted moral...enquiry...and students [would be] initiated into both enquiry and controversy.' (p.231)

I would like one of the ways in which you judge the validity of this thesis as an original contribution to educational knowledge, to be partly determined through my ability to convey to you the rationality of what I am doing in the name of education. This contribution entails an implicit concern for enquiry and constrained disagreement. This means that I am not attempting with my students to come to consensus so much as to a state of awareness in which we can agree to differ if necessary. Sometimes arriving at such a state is itself educational as I hope to show throughout this work. As I have already implied, genuine dialogue can sometimes mean that no consensus can be reached. The risks (Winter, 1989) of such open-ended discourse, alluded to in The General Prologue, are addressed as well in Parts One and Four.

This idea of constrained disagreement impinges as well on your response to this thesis: it is possible that you will not be sympathetic to the ideas, processes and conclusions put forward in this text. I hope, however, that I am able to persuade you through the clarity of the writing, that there is a value in a process of education which makes sense within its own parameters, whilst showing itself concerned with the judgements of others. This is another way in which you can judge the validity of this present writing: **Do I show myself concerned with rational arguments derived from my own educational experiences and the appropriate views of others concerned in the process?**

I agree with the values in MacIntyre's (1990) comments, that what I am trying to do in this thesis is to set out:

'a framework for a type of narrative of moral enquiry to be enacted by individuals who do and will exhibit their rationality by participating in the forms of rationality established by and through a particular tradition and indeed, insofar as moral enquiry is integral to the moral life itself, a framework for a set of narratives of particular lives.' (p.129-130)

He also says in lament at the disappearance of a moral tradition of enquiry, (one to which I subscribe):

'Questions of truth in morality...have become matters for private allegiance, (p.217)

rather, than the public matters of debate and concern which, he feels (and I agree) should be the purpose of the modern university. This thesis shows an increasing commitment to a process of moral enquiry in education, viewing education itself as a 'value-laden practical activity' (Peters, 1966), and defends such moral enquiry upon rationally defensible bases.

Fifth: Representation and Meaning:

This section represents the greatest concentration in this Introduction on the dialectic between representation and meaning I explore later in the thesis through reflections on my educational practice. It highlights the particular educational standards of judgement by which I invite you to judge the educational validity of this text and their epistemological significance in terms of educational knowledge.

Once again I would like to alert you to the experimental nature of this thesis' own representation which, as I have already mentioned in reference to Eisner (1993), is necessary in the conveying of various types of meanings. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) write about the problematic nature of representation in qualitative research, that it is, for example, a fallacy that:

'researchers can directly capture lived experience. Such experience...is created in the social text written by the researcher. This is the representational crisis. It confronts the inescapable problem of representation but does so within a framework that makes the direct link between experience and text problematic.' (p.11)

I accept their argument to the extent that I had already grounded my thesis in that way of seeing before reading their text. Because I perceive the links between representation and meaning to affect meanings, I wish to alert you to the assumption which this thesis is making: **the constructions of representation in this text act as lenses through which you are able to perceive my meanings.** This is why in this Introduction and the thesis as a whole I filter an explanation of the various aspects of my educational practice, claims to know, and standards of judgement through the ways in which I represent them. Thus my three claims to educational knowledge:

- 1) The development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships has educational use-value in judging the quality of my educational practice;**
- 2) The analysis of my own fiction is an ontological guide to my**

effectiveness in turning my educational values into action;

3) I am developing my own living educational theory through a synthesis of my ontological, aesthetic and ethical concerns,

are continually highlighted through an explanation of the dialectical nature of meaning with representation. These claims to knowledge interact in their turn with the educational standards of judgement which can be used to test the validity of this claim to educational knowledge. All the above are expressions of my educational development, rendered here as my living educational theory. This interrelatedness might explain the difficulty I have had in separating them in preparation for this Introduction. However I would like to take each of them in turn and explain their significance to this thesis so that when you encounter their manifestations within the text, you should be in a position to judge not only my ability to explicate them, but also their educational validity. In this thesis I will explain how perceiving, and then acting on, the link between standards of judgement and the aspects being judged as aesthetic, can enhance the educational nature of my own enquiry. I will also show that my own understanding of what constitutes the evolution of educational standards of judgement is an aspect which characterises my educational development, but I will go into more detail about that shortly.

Whilst on the subject of representation and meaning, I also wish to mention that the form of this Introduction differs from the rest of this text in the sense that it is wholly propositional rather than in the dialectical forms which I advocate elsewhere (see Section 5.2.3). I am concerned at this stage more with enabling you to ground your understanding of the rest of the thesis than I am about my own authenticity as an educational

writer. (See also 5.3.4 of this Introduction.) The desire for authenticity was one of the reasons I wrote The General Prologue. It is, I believe, a more fitting form of representation to convey particular values than this Introduction might appear to convey. However, I seek to explain my educational knowledge, not just to represent it and hence the propositional form of this Introduction is, I believe, an appropriate way of conveying the various aspects of my educational values at this stage in the text.

In the following section, each of my three original claims to educational knowledge in the thesis are framed as expressions of my own educational development. Their explanation throughout the thesis will constitute my own living educational theory.

5.1. An expression of my own educational development: the development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships has use value in judging the quality of my educative relationships:

Let me first take the significance of a particular way of representing the processes evolved through the paradigm of individually-orientated action research. In Part One of the thesis I explain why I am engaged in such a research enquiry. When relating meaning to representation, Eisner (1993) talks about suiting means to ends:

'We exploit different forms of representation to construct meanings that might otherwise elude us...Different forms of representation can themselves be treated in different ways.' (p.6)

If, as Masterman (1974: 76) maintains, a paradigm is '*a way of seeing*', then this way of seeing will, in the words of Lakatos (1974):

'have its own standards...A new paradigm brings a totally new rationality'. (p.178)

He goes on to write:

'If to discover is to prove, but nothing is provable, then there can be no discoveries, only discovery-claims.' (p.178)

Here I am back again with one of the ideas from Clarke et al (1993) about specifically how an action enquiry can be judged. I have come to understand the educational and political significance of aligning my work within a particular paradigm; indeed, part of my educational development can be plotted through the deepening layers of my understanding of the significance of what it means to work in the name of education within a specific kind of action research framework.

Through my research I draw the conclusion that when I am acting with a conscious degree of consistency between my paradigmatic insights and my responses to the educational and human needs of my students, that a pattern develops whose tracing is at once educational and aesthetically useful (Laidlaw, 1994c.) I claim that such perception is aesthetic for me because it enables me to access the unity within my enquiry which is to do with the links I can usefully make in my practice between the knowledge, a theory of my own being and the ethics of my practice. In Part Four I show an increased ability to draw together insights about the nature of education

into an appropriately educational practice as my understanding of the aesthetics of my work develops through the application of the standard of judgement I term an aesthetic morphology. I show what I have learnt from applying this aesthetic morphology in relation to the teaching of English to two groups of girls in a local comprehensive school. In developing an aesthetic morphology as a reflexive tool, I am responding to my need to explain my own educational practice. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) write:

'The qualitative researcher...uses the tools of his or her own methodological trade, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials as are at hand...If new tools have to be invented or pieced together, then the researcher will do this.' (my emphasis, p. 2)

5.1.1.

Experimental Forms

Showing the processes I have been involved in will necessitate an experimental form of representation because of the nature of the insights and processes being described and explained. I am claiming that the experimental nature of the form of parts of this thesis (in particular The General Prologue and Parts Three and Four) is justified in the sense that it is an authentic account of coming to understand and represent a process of educational research which for good reason I am not presenting in a more traditional form. I am contending that the basis for the form I present it in is a rationally-defensible one. Eisner, for example, asks:

'Why should rational processes be limited to propositional discourse or to number?' (p.7)

I subscribe to a constructivist view of reality which influences the ways in which I am able to write about my experience. I identify with Kincheloe (1991) for example, when he writes:

'Post-formal thinkers/researchers are comfortable with the uncertain, tentative nature of knowledge emerging from critical constructivist research. They are tolerant of contradiction and value the attempt to integrate ostensibly dissimilar phenomena into new, revealing syntheses'. (p.44)

I would like this thesis to reveal forms of practice, which are at once open to new ideas, but which emphasise processes of rigour (Winter, 1989; Laidlaw, 1994b) that enhance the educational nature of those processes. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) go further than Kincheloe and write about:

'fieldwork and writing blur into one another. There is in the final analysis no difference between writing and fieldwork. These two perspectives inform one another throughout.' (p.10)

If it is the case that my practice informs my writing which then informs my practice in a generative way, to articulate such seamlessness requires experimentation, just as educational action research enquiries require imagined solutions and trial and error. This thesis is a testament to my attempts to reveal in writing as authentic an explanation of my educational practice and development as I am capable. (See also in this Introduction 'Authenticity' - 5.3.4, and 'Ontological Authenticity' - 5.3.4a, for a fuller explanation of this point.)

5.1.2.

Systematic enquiry made public (Stenhouse, 1975)

I recognise there are areas of knowledge whose uncertainty of definition denote their complexity. In this thesis I also maintain that this uncertainty of definition can mirror the complexity of the processes of human development. One of the aims of this thesis is to untangle some of these complex aspects of human interaction within an educational context and then subject my findings to validation in order to improve, and to become accountable for, the work I am doing.

When trying to understand the nature of how we come to know, I find Popper (1972) helpful when he writes:

'We do not know: we can only guess. And our guesses are guided by the unscientific, the metaphysical...faith in laws, in regularities which we can uncover, discover.' (p.278)

Whilst I am claiming this thesis is a contribution to educational rather than scientific knowledge, I would contend that my research into the nature of what I know has been scientifically systematic as has always been a requirement in educational action research. (See Hodgkinson, 1957; Elliott & Adelman, 1973; Elliott, 1977; Brock-Utne, 1980; Stenhouse, 1983; van Manen, 1984; Whitehead, 1985, 1989a&b, 1993b.) Being systematic does not automatically confer validity on any form of research as Winter (1989) explains at length. However, Popper (1972) says:

'How is the system that represents our world of experience to be

distinguished? The answer is: by the fact that it has been submitted to tests and has stood up to tests.' (p.39)

I am claiming that within this thesis there is evidence that I have submitted my ideas and conclusions to tests, that I have shown through a process of public accountability tied into an integrated approach to evaluation and improvement, my commitment to further my understanding of my subject, education. This is in the context of trying to help others to learn how to become accountable for themselves within the workplace and to improve the quality of learning for all involved within the process. My conclusions about the ramifications of becoming accountable in educational processes are revealed most clearly in Part Four of this thesis.

5.1.3.

Locating my own experience

In this thesis I am going to present you with my world of experience in such ways as I believe are consistent with the meanings conveyed within what it means to me to learn to develop good quality educative relationships within my action research enquiries. I further believe, with Russell (1993), in the authority of my experience which has submitted its processes, insights and conclusions to systematic enquiry over time; and which incorporates the judgements of myself and others engaged within, and even outside, the research, together with a wide range of reading in the relevant literature. Russell quotes Richert (1992) on the importance of starting the process of teaching (and he goes on to deal with research as well) which is enhanced by:

'listening to yourself as an authority on your own experience...as an important part of learning (p.193)'. (p.4)

I believe that the standards of judgement which anyone makes about a claim to knowledge (Whitehead, 1985) should be actively influential in the processes of education itself. In this thesis I am concerned with substantiating an epistemological link between my own educational development, the educational validity of the processes in which I and my pupils and students engage, and the educational conclusions which we draw. I want to ensure in my work in education that I use appropriate standards of judgement at every stage. I believe that the search for the appropriate standards of judgement is itself educational, just as McNiff (1989, 1993) claims that the processes of research should themselves be educational. Substantiation of these claims is particularly to be found in Parts One and Four of the thesis.

I will now come back to my original point in this section about the far-reaching nature of a paradigm and its representation. I am making a claim in this thesis that the particular paradigm within which I am researching - i.e. individually-orientated action research - has ramifications not only for what I can come to know, but how I can represent it in this thesis. I want at this early stage to alert you to the interrelated nature of form and content.

5.2. An expression of my own educational development: my own fiction as an ontological guide to my effectiveness in turning my educational values into action:

I now want to look at the second category which impinges on the

presentation and meanings of this thesis and which relates to the point in the last paragraph about the links between form and content. This section also reveals a significant perspective on my own educational development. My view about the tentative nature of reality leads me to experiment with the forms in which I present my educational writing. Although, in Eisner's words:

'experience can never be displayed in the form in which it initially appeared', (p.7)

I will be attempting to reveal as authentic an account of the journey of my own educational development as I am able, as I describe and explain the nature of my educative relationships. The preoccupation with authenticity and its significance to the educational truth and validity of this account are issues which I deal with in depth in the most experimental sections of this thesis, (The General Prologue and Part Three) and in Part Four in the articulation of my own living educational theory. This preoccupation has enabled me to develop a form of representation in which fiction is a pivotal aspect.

Clarke et al (1993) have this to say about fictional forms of representation:

'In some cases a format for inquiry may have been chosen which is not compatible with some of the [more traditional] research criteria (i.e. through fictional writing), and in such cases the writer must inform the reader about how the work is to be read, how it relates to the practice from which it is derived, and how it might contribute to the knowledge of others.' (p.491)

In Parts One and Three of this thesis I integrate fictional forms in a way which, I am claiming, is enabling me to make sense of educational process that are of value, both to my own educational development, and that of my students. (See also Rowland, 1991.) In Part Four I show what I have learnt from applying the fictional forms in earlier sections through the innovative integration of a literary form, as you may have already experienced in The General Prologue.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) also write:

'The search for Grand Narratives will be replaced by more local, small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations.' (p.11)

As you read the aspects of this thesis which use fictional devices (only Part Two does not) I ask you to consider how their use enables me to portray significant educational truths. Does my use of fiction and of fictional devices enable you to come closer to an understanding of the educational nature of this claim to knowledge and the values underlying the conclusions reached? I hope they do.

5.2.1.

The Significance of the Writing-Up Stages

I want to highlight aspects of my own educational development and the effect which it has had on the writing of this thesis. This text represents within the form itself, a development of various insights from the beginning of the writing up period (January, 1993) until now (September, 1996). The writing-up stages of an action enquiry report have been

significant ones for me in coming to understand my own educational development through the analyses of my educative relationships. I will comment on this at length in Part One when considering the final report of one of my Postgraduate Education students from 1992-1993 and also in Part Four as an integral aspect of the conclusion to my thesis.

One of the most significant aspects of my learning during this period of write-up has been to do with what it means to bear my audience in mind. I believe that I show an increasing awareness throughout the thesis of keeping you in mind as I write. This is particularly evident, I believe, in the Prologues and Epilogues which were written last as a way of grounding the insights in each Part for the reader. During this process I asked myself continuously the questions: 'What does that term mean?' 'Am I making assumptions here?' and the like in the hope that I would render my text more comprehensible. I hope in this resubmission that the reader feels directly addressed and respected as someone with a valid point of view. This is allied to my growing understanding that educational writing should seek not simply to express but to make links with others (McNiff, 1989; Lomax, 1994a). When I was told by my examiners that the thesis '*required excessive interpretation on the part of the reader*', I was then in a difficult position. I didn't wish to violate the aesthetic unity of my text which was judged as having: '*a great deal of excellent work...as it stands, much of it publishable,*' but I also truly wanted to communicate to you something I believe to be of educational value.

As you will see from the contents-pages and the headings of each Part in the thesis, there is an apparent gap of about 18 months in the writing-up period. After Part Three was completed in early 1994, I administered the

third World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management here at the University of Bath. In the original thesis Part Four consisted of work done for that Congress and some new work in the classroom in 1995. In the new Part Four I have integrated some of that early classroom work with a Year Nine group into a new form which I presented at a conference during Easter, 1996. I believe this thesis now represents a greater synthesis of my seminar and classroom practice than did the original submission. It also reflects my central interest in teacher-research which I elaborate upon in the Epilogue to Part Four.

I am claiming that I develop an increasing degree of synthesis from Part One to Part Two and finally through Part Three to Part Four. I would claim that The General Prologue, and Parts Three and Four are the most experimental and profound aspects of the thesis. There is a mutual dependence between form and content in The General Prologue, and Parts Three and Four in particular in which complex ideas are mirrored within an intricate form. This is especially so in The General Prologue through its synthesis of all the dimensions which I claim constitute my own living educational theory - the ethics, ontology, aesthetics, and educational knowledge which emerge from my practice - whose understanding partly constitutes my educational development. The rest of this thesis is an attempt to explain the educational significance of The General Prologue.

Eisner (1993) says about much recent educational research writing:

'I believe that our discourse defines neither the scope of our rationality nor the varieties of our understanding...I believe there is too much practical wisdom that tells us that the images created by literature,

poetry, the visual arts, dance and music give us insights that inform us in the special ways that only artistically-rendered forms make possible.'

(p7)

I am claiming in this thesis that the form of rationality to which I subscribe, has room in it for descriptions and explanations of human experience which embrace the metaphysical as well as the physical. This is represented in the thesis through the use of extracts from 'The Ancient Mariner' by Coleridge which seek to illuminate some of the values and insights underpinning my practice. As I have researched my own educational processes, through my focus on my educative relationships, I have perceived a link between poetic forms of portrayal, metaphysical meanings and my own educational development. This growth of perception has been a gradual process within the research and has run parallel to my growing awareness of the educational implications of formal identification within a particular research paradigm. It is symbolised in The General Prologue and in each subsequent Prologue and Epilogue.

In this thesis you will see me describing and explaining particular emerging forms and structures in my educational practice (including my developmental understanding of, and location within, the individually-oriented action research paradigm). Through these emerging forms and structures my own educational development and improvements in the quality of learning are articulated. The aesthetics of my practice are constituted by the synthesis of all these aspects of development and improvements in the quality of learning, into ways of working dedicated to growth and learning, to learners being more capable of leading full and

productive lives and in which individuals, and the contexts in which the relationships are taking place, attain a mutually beneficial dialectical relationship. Part Four concludes with evidence of how my understanding through my research has improved my practice as an educator. As the writing-up stages have progressed, I have come to understand the significance of a synthesis between the emerging forms and structures of my practice (the morphology) and their worth (the aesthetic and educational value). The development of the clarity of my thinking about the significance of this synthesis is itself one of the clearest indications of my own educational development.

5.2.2.

Development of research foci

What is also of importance here is the extent to which the nature of what I have been exploring has been developing and diversifying as the research has grown. In preparation for writing up Part One I set about analysing the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships in order to enhance their educative nature. As the thesis develops, I begin to recognise the significance of explicating an aesthetic morphology within education. I become dissatisfied with that and gradually perceive the educational value of explaining a series of syntheses between strands of my educational philosophy, my methods and practical intentions. As my understanding develops through the work in the thesis (both in the writing and the educational practice with my students and pupils) not only does the emphasis in my research interest develop and change, but also the forms in which I can express it. However, in Part Four (see also The General Prologue) I conflate all the disparate aspects of my claims to educational knowledge - which are concerned with revealing my own educational

development through a synthesis of my own ethics, ontology, aesthetic and knowledge - into a form which articulates my living educational theory from within the moral values of a work of fiction. In this new form, the moral values of the fiction inspire a living process towards better educative relationships and a way of bringing the values to life in the classroom. In its written form the conclusion to the thesis synthesises what has been hitherto separable into a coherent narrative, a symbiosis between form, content, and values which has not been possible up to this point. The General Prologue is a synthesis, but its values are left largely implicit. It is the purpose of this thesis to explain the significance of what I have left largely implicit in that section.

5.2.3.

Dialectical forms

Socrates: *Who will be best able to direct the legislator in his work? Will not the user be the man?*

Heraclitus: *Yes.*

Socrates: *Must not this be he who knows how to ask questions?*

Heraclitus: *Yes.*

Socrates: *And how to answer them?*

Heraclitus: *Yes.*

Socrates: *And him who knows how to ask and answer, you would call a dialectician?'*

(from 'Cratylus', by Plato.)

This part of the Introduction is the most crucial to an understanding of this section and of the thesis as a whole. The choice to represent my thesis dialectically is a considered one and attempts to fulfil Winter's (1989) notion of change as a fundamental aspect of any process. In this thesis I am contending that an understanding of the way in which things change is a prerequisite for any educational process. Winter says about the potential of change:

'The dialectical approach...[asserts] the change process as a fundamental

axiom. The argument is as follows: individuals are a product of their social world, but this social world is structured as a series of contradictions, and is thus in a continuous process of change; its influence upon individuals is thus both conflicting and varying, and can thus never be either unambiguous and final.' (p.51)

It has been part of my own educational development to recognise the significance of representing my research in a dialectical form. There is a tradition, in particular amongst the action researchers at Bath University with Jack Whitehead, to aspire towards dialectical forms of representation (Larter, 1988; Gurney, 1988; McNiff, 1988, 1989, 1992, 1993; Eames, 1990, 1993, 1995; Evans, 1995; Whitehead, 1993b; Hughes, 1996). Much of the published literature specifically about dialectics does not satisfy me, however. In Ilyenkov (1977) there is an expression of a truth divorced from relationships and experiences in the world. It is a truth coined from abstract thinking as if human beings themselves are abstract and do not contain anything but causal impulses: who function like machines. In Ilyenkov's work I am confronted with an analytical representation of reality which does not ground knowledge within human relationships.

Dialecticians such as like Belenky et al (1986), Greene (1986), Ely et al (1991, 1993), Noddings & Witherell (1991), take human relationships as their bedrock of meaning. I am aware that all these are female. Although it is not my aim in this thesis to expand much on this aspect, I am coming to the conclusion that there is a significant gender difference operating here, which in my experience hinges upon a woman's ability to place a higher value on relationships, both between individuals, and between people and their ideas. Others have not necessarily subscribed to this view. (See

Weiner, 1993). My stance on reality is one in which the categorisation and compartmentalisation of ideas are not as prominent characteristics as in the work of male dialecticians such as Ilyenkov, for example.

In the process of writing this thesis, however, I have derived much insight from Ilyenkov's 1977 text 'Dialectical Logic'. I see a limitation, however, within the form of presentation of his ideas. All the women cited above, in particular Witherell & Noddings, and Belenky et al, are at pains to illustrate what a dialectic in action looks like and how it relates to people's lives. In Part One I go into some detail about a female way of knowing (Belenky et al, 1986), although I do not subscribe particularly to a feminist (politicised) stance. I am however, concerned that this thesis represents a dialectical form in action because I believe that the processes which lead me to write in this form are those which constitute good educational practice, and embody the values I want to live in my educative relationships. In the Epilogue to Part Four I go into detail about how I believe that I have gone further than Ilyenkov in the sense that I have demonstrated, rather than only written about, the dialectical processes I have been involved in. In addition I show in the thesis what I have learnt from being engaged within a dialectical process and what it means to my own educational development.

In other words I represent my work with students, pupils and colleagues in ways which show how development has taken place. I show in the thesis our correspondence, conversations, interactions and growth of ideas and perspectives. I reveal how this process both of practice and representation enables me and others to learn (see also Rowland, 1994). The emphasis on dialectical forms of representation becomes

progressively pronounced and focused throughout the thesis, with The General Prologue, and Parts Three, and Four achieving the highest concentration of my educational values in an apposite form. Although in the thesis as a whole I am concerned to explore the dialectics of practice, in Part Four I begin to characterise the responsibilities incurred in the dialectic between the individual and society in a more ethical way. (See 5.3.3.) Of using dialectics as an approach to the collection and subsequent analysis of data collected in a dialectical enquiry, Winter (1989) says the following:

'dialectics gives us a principled basis for making selections.' (p.51)

I agree with this statement and find much within the works already cited in this section upon which to base my own understanding of dialectics and through which you may, if you wish, ground your own grasp of the work I am doing in this thesis.

Before going on to elucidate my ideas about my living educational theory it is necessary for me to point out a connection that is increasingly made within this text relating to the purpose of representing my thesis dialectically with the educational value of the work itself. All of this section in the Introduction is dealing with Representation and Meaning. I have discussed the importance as I see it of representing my experience dialectically because of the authenticity which I perceive as a necessary aspect of my educational writing and because I view representation and meaning as linked in the construction of knowledge. Let me add a further dimension to this section which is concerned with authenticity, dialectical representation and the meaning of what I am doing, within a framework

which seeks to find appropriate standards of judgement by which to test the validity of this text.

In Parts One, Two and Three of this thesis I struggle to articulate a growing intuition about the educational significance of my own understanding of my educational development. In Part Four I finally express this growing awareness as an expression of an 'immanent dialectic'. By this term I understand a process whose significance can only emerge in practice over time. If, at the heart of what I do, is a truth whose significance I will never quite grasp in the doing and at the time I do it, I must therefore make allowances for that within my representations of it. At best I will be able to point towards the possible significance of what I do and the meanings inherent within actions, but I will not be able to represent the actions themselves or the significance of them at the time. If this is a valid statement, then it follows that the educational standards of judgement by which I perceive my educational development should be appraised in this thesis, must themselves express the dialectical nature of the processes through which I lend educational significance to my actions and words. In other words I believe that there should be an exchange of meaning between educational standards of judgement and the objects of their validation in this thesis, just as I see that there is an exchange of meaning between actions and educational reflections on their significance. (See Laidlaw, 1994a, written in response to Lomax, 1994b on the subject of the educational value of dialectical standards of judgement.)

5.3. An expression of my own educational development: the development of my own living educational theory:

I come now to the third way in which the meanings in this thesis and its

attendant claim to educational knowledge interact with its forms of representation and reveal my own educational development in the process. The question I want you to bear in mind from this section of the Introduction is: **How valid is my claim to be developing my own living educational theory?**

As I mentioned before, within the work I have been doing (of which this thesis is a part) my ability to write about the significance of developing my own living educational theory is closely linked to my own educational development. Indeed Eraut (1993) calls for new ways of looking at knowledge and theory within the realm of educational management. I think his ideas are applicable to educational research as a whole, particularly when he advocates evolving such knowledge to enable it to explain educational practice more comprehensively. He says :

'Such knowledge needs to be widely shared. In order to take control over their own professional learning, teachers...need to have some awareness of their own personal knowledge base: what is held in common with others, what is purely personal, what is habit, what is intuitive, what is proven, what is fallible, what is authentic, what they know, what they don't know, how they work, how they evaluate their work, what frameworks and assumptions underpin their thinking.'

(p.225)

The emphasis placed upon the processes leading to accountability are crucial to my work in education. Polanyi's (1958) notion of the ethics of individuals acting responsibly and with universal intent within the work they are doing with others, comes to mind here and is discussed in

particular in Part One. Whitehead (1989b) maintains that educational knowledge and theory are being constituted by individuals' descriptions and explanations of their practice as they become accountable to others about the work they do in the name of education. As an advocate of individually-orientated action research I adhere to this view. In this thesis I show a developing consciousness in the creation of my own living educational theory which requires a synthesis between the ethics, ontology and knowledge of my practice in order to achieve an educationally aesthetic significance (Parts Two, Three and Four); and in which ontology is related closely to notions of authenticity which I will explain in 5.3.4. & 5.3.4.a. My insights derived from this aesthetic significance are themselves then capable of being fed back into my educative relationships in educational ways. In other words, developing my own living educational theory becomes educationally helpful in improving the quality of learning, just as an application of the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships has use-value in improving the quality of my educational practice. I demonstrate the similarity of the links I have just made in the Epilogue to Part Four.

5.3.1.

Use-Value

I see use-value (Whitehead and Foster, 1984) as a crucial aspect of any process of educational research. I believe that evolving my own living educational theory to be a useful endeavour. Writing up this thesis has developed, I believe, the clarity of my thinking and ways of expressing that thinking in action and writing. I wish this thesis to be judged partly through the clarity of my writing as I perceive a link between clarity of

expression and educational use-value. (See, for example, Anderson, 1992 who writes lucidly about intentions and actions in creating change and focuses specifically on the use-value of applying method and philosophy for the benefit of those involved in the processes of innovation.)

Meanings for me are related to people, their needs and their view of the significance of their own experiences. I see trying to work with, and consequently represent, ways of improving human existence as educational. Feyerabend (1974) writes:

'It seems to me that happiness and the full development of an individual human being is now as ever the highest possible value.

(p.210)

He goes on to say that:

'we need a methodology and a set of institutions which enable us to lose as little as possible of what we are capable of doing and which force us as little as possible to deviate from our natural inclinations.' (p.210)

In this text I attempt to reveal a high level of concern for individuals as I show what it means to help them realise their own potential partly by enabling their own words to come through undistorted in what I write. The processes which it is necessary to go through in order for the students' own words to be validly represented in this text, have determined to an extent the content of our educative relationships. This principle has also been true for the students, for whom a validating principle on which their own action enquiry reports are judged, is based upon the degree to which their own pupils' voices come through in the texts. I go into some

considerable detail about this aspect of the significance of the links between representation and meaning in Part One of the thesis. My efforts to enable my students to speak for themselves resonate powerfully with Foucault's (1980 - ed. Gordon) words:

'You were the first to teach us something absolutely fundamental: the indignity of speaking for others...and to appreciate...that only those directly concerned can speak in a practical way on their own behalf.'

(p.41)

Foucault highlights here what is also my own desire - to develop strategies whereby my students can learn to speak for themselves about their own concerns and enable their pupils to do the same. I believe (see Laidlaw, 1994b) with Dewey (1916) that one of the aims of education is to enable people to lead full and productive lives. One of the ways in which this can be effected is to help them in an educational context to understand what it means to take responsibility for their own learning. I have found that helping individuals to locate their own values is a powerful aid to learning. Thus for me, there is an educational use-value in enabling students to speak for themselves. I go into detail about this in different ways throughout this text.

The degree to which you perceive my students speaking for themselves in this text is also a criterion through which I wish this text to be judged. I am concerned that some recent literature concerning teachers (see Calderhead, 1987; ed. Goodson, 1992; ed. Day et al, 1993; Huberman, 1993;) concentrates on academic research about teachers' thinking and practice rather than presenting the authors' engagement with individual teachers as they try to

improve their practice. (A notable exception to this is McNiff and Collins' (1994) text about the work of some action researchers in Ireland in which individual teachers and pupils speak on their own behalf about issues which concern them.) In Part Four and in its Epilogue I expand on what it means to my educational development to be engaging in processes in which pupils are speaking about issues which concern them. Improving practice is one of my primary aims as an educator and in Parts Three and Four I believe I show this most effectively. In the Epilogues I point out where I now feel I may have failed to do this. In this thesis I take care to show that my understanding and educational knowledge are the result of my collaboration with teacher education students, for example, or pupils in the classroom, rather than from outside studies conducted on them. The stance of the researcher as a co-worker is one of the primary perspectives of an individually-oriented action researcher who sees herself as an integral part of the research process and in fact indistinguishable from it. (See Denzin and Lincoln (1994) for confirmation of this view.)

5.3.2.

Truth and Concern for Individuals

Related to this latter point is my desire to represent a view of knowledge in which truth and concern for individuals can be seen to be interrelated (Belenky et al, 1986; Noddings & Witherell, 1991). I see this view of knowledge as educational within an educative relationship. Such a view would also appear to be pivotal in a thesis which is partly concerned with judging the quality of my educative relationships, when the educative factor constitutes a search for truth and the relationship is often articulated through a concern for individuals. In addition it is a way of linking the 'T' of an action research enquiry with the context in which it is

enacted (the dialectical nature of individually-orientated action enquiries). Unlike Rorty (1979), and like Eisner, I want to pursue the truth, not give it up. I want Fenstermacher's (1992) notion of what is educational (as opposed to the systemics) to permeate my action in a pursuit of truth which sees as pivotal the ethics of such an endeavour. Truth, however, does not exist for me externally to my ability to perceive it, but in dialectical relationship with the people who are pursuing it and in the contexts in which the action takes place.

An educationally significant dialectic for me is created between truth and concern for individuals. I am inspired by living dialectics. In this thesis I will be pursuing a dialectical form of representation, acknowledging that although the representation cannot be the experience itself, I can, as I stated before, portray the experience with a satisfying degree of authenticity. And because my own educational development is in part characterised through my growing understanding of the significance of a dialectical form of representation, this text's inner consistency and educational validity reveal a developmental commitment to a dialectical form. I seek to show a new form of dialectical representation in which there is not only a concern to articulate 'mutual truths' derived from educative relationships over time, but also a regard for theory which is itself woven into the fabric of the practical dialectic between truth and concern for individuals; and this in a form which emphasises each of these factors. Within this dialectical form I hold on to the art of the dialectician in retaining simultaneously the one and the many. In other words I maintain an ability to break down into component parts and to synthesise from my experiences in education in what I am claiming is a rational account, lending itself to both analytical and holistic

interpretation. In this thesis the Introduction, the Prologues and Epilogues represent the many, for example, and the General Prologue holds together all the dimensions of my educational enquiry.

5.3.3.

Ethics

The link between my living educational theory and its representation within this thesis is also important at the point of making conscious in my practice what the ethics of the processes my students, pupils and I are engaged in, signify in terms of the conclusions we can draw about our experiences. This point is linked as well with my earlier comment about Foucault's and Feyerabend's insights. Habermas (1974) says:

'Only communicative ethics guarantees the generality of admissible norms and the autonomy of acting subjects solely through the discursive redeemability of the validity claims with which norms appear. That is, generality is guaranteed in that the only norms that may claim generality are those on which everyone affected agrees...without constraint...Only communicative ethics is universal...Only communicative ethics guarantees autonomy in that it carries on the process of the insertion of drive potentials into a communicative structure of action - that is, the socialization process.' (p.89)

In words which relate to my own educational context: the ways in which my students, pupils and I come to understand and carry out our practice and then are able to write about it - are validated in part through the extent to which we subject and justify our findings to each other and to the

contexts in which the practice is located. This idea relates closely to Clarke's et al (1993) view about what constitutes validity in an action research enquiry. I take this point up specifically in the Epilogues. I am also claiming in this thesis that such processes of justification help to constitute my practice as educational, as I argue in particular in the Epilogues to Parts One and Two.

What I am claiming also constitutes educational knowledge and theory within this text, is the extent to which I show how I become accountable for the degree of concern with which I enable the voices of my students to come through in this account. Enabling students to 'speak with their own voices' seems to me to be an ethical issue because it has an effect on the processes we can engage in (as I discuss in Parts One, Two and Four and the Epilogue to Part Two). In my experience, enabling such self-expression is itself a democratising process (Laidlaw, 1994b) and if such a process can become part of the subject of the dialogues I and other learners are engaged in, this would appear to strengthen the democracy of the processes themselves (Laidlaw, 1994b, 1996).

In this thesis I am concerned to describe and explain how values such as democracy emerge in my educational practice over time and how such an emergence helps me to improve my educational practice with students and pupils. In Part Four I offer a specific explanation of what it means for my own educational development to have an increasing focus on a democratic standard of judgement by which I can partially evaluate the educational quality of the processes I am engaging in with pupils.

In this thesis I describe and explain other ethical values which have

emerged in the course of my educational practice over time. These values are 'responsibility' - described and explained throughout the thesis, but specifically in the Epilogue to Part Two and in Part Four, and 'awe' (Epilogue to Part Two); in addition the value of 'trustworthiness' (Epilogue to Part Four) emerged as I was trying to explain the educational nature of my own knowledge within this resubmission.

Furthermore, the value I am placing on democratising my educational practice and responsibility have emerged in a dialectical relationship and this affects the knowledge I can come to about their meanings. This is evident in Part Four. In the Epilogue to Part Two I explain my understanding of what responsibility meant to my educational practice in 1993/4 when I wrote Part Two, and then what it means in retrospect from my more developed understanding in 1996. In Part Four I show how my understanding of linking the educational use-value of both responsibility and the democratising of the educational processes has deepened, and what this understanding means to my own educational development and my attempts to improve the quality of learning. I am claiming that this understanding is partly achieved through my negotiation with pupils about how they might articulate their own educational standards of judgement as a way of taking an appropriate responsibility for their own learning as well as improving its educational quality. In addition, my own educational development is highlighted through my own concern to evolve developmental standards of judgement by which my own work in education (for example this thesis) can be evaluated.

5.3.4.

Authenticity

Furthermore I want to emphasise that the authenticity of my account can partly be judged by the ways in which I represent and show in practice, the concern I have taken to ensure that the words and experiences of my students have not been distorted through my writing. By this I am taking into account the ethical implications of enabling others to speak for themselves (Foucault, 1980). This goes further than Winter's (1989) notions of rigour to be applied to an action research account and links the rigour of my processes to my own living educational theory. If, as Clarke et al (1993) advocate, I am partly to set the standards of judgement through which you can judge the validity of this action research enquiry's claim to knowledge, then I would like authenticity to be one of the criteria you use. In Part Three I go into detail about what I understand by 'authenticity', and in Part Four I extend that through my evaluation of my work in his thesis to date, but a brief description here might be useful. By authenticity I mean that quality which I bring to education which ensures that I reveal in action and representation those processes which encourage a developing synthesis between the ethics, ontology and aesthetics of my educational practice and a commitment to enabling the search for mutual and educational truths for all concerned within the learning process and the context (see in particular Part Two with its new Epilogue). This also must concern itself with representing as rigorously as possible the reality of the immanent dialectic at the heart of all the educational processes within which I am living. In other words I would like you to consider these two questions:

1) Does this thesis open up to critical discourse, to you and to the learners represented within it, the educational nature and purpose of the processes I engage in?

2) Does this thesis reveal the educational values emerging with the learners (myself and my students and pupils) in action over time?

5.3.4.a

Ontological Authenticity

This is one of the most difficult areas of my experience to describe and explain. In this thesis I wish to represent my understanding of 'ontology' as a theory of my own being, an example of which is to be found at the very beginning of the General Prologue. Hanfling (1992), for example, refers to ontology as: '*a study of being in the abstract,*' (p.75). However, it is the explanation of ontological experiences, as Paskow (1988) suggests, that are problematic in verification:

'Since I often experience the physical world as filled with meaning or significance, how can my experience be reconciled with an 'objective' or scientific perspective that affirms that the physical world has no such meaning or significance?...This problem I will unrigorously characterise as the paradox of the subjective and the objective, my world versus the world.' (p.151)

In this thesis I attempt to characterise the uncharacterisable as I try to show what it means for my own educational development and living educational theory to value a state of being which is neither subjective nor objective but has an openness to an awareness of self and others which enables me to touch what I value in Life itself. In a sense simultaneously to value others as I value myself. Tillich (1952) says this:

'It is the function of an ontological concept to use some realm of

experience to point towards the characteristics of being-itself which lie above the split between subjectivity and objectivity and which therefore cannot be expressed literally in terms taken from the subjective or the objective side. Ontology speaks analogously. Being as being transcends objectivity as well as subjectivity. But in order to approach it cognitively one must use both. And one can do so because both are rooted in that which transcends them, in being-itself. It is in the light of this consideration that the ontological concepts referred to must be interpreted. They must be understood not literally but analogously.'

(p.34/5)

In this thesis I show a valuing of subjective and objective forms of understanding. Where my concern to know my own ontology becomes educational is in the nature of its effect on myself and others. Why I care about ontological authenticity as a criterion in this thesis is to do with the degree to which you too can believe my claim that such knowledge is educationally useful in my own educational development and living educational theory. It is linked therefore to the value of 'trustworthiness' which emerged at the time of writing the Epilogue to Part Four and as I explain it there.

Sixth: Standards of judgement again: an aesthetic morphology as an expression of an immanent dialectic

Now that I have outlined in detail the links I am making in this thesis between representation and meaning in developing educational standards of judgement grounded in particular values, I would like to return my attention to the first claim to educational knowledge which impinges on the notion of the 'immanent dialectic' highlighted earlier in this

Introduction.

I have increasingly realised that I find it appropriate to apply criteria for judgement in a developmental way. If I advocate a developmental approach to educational research, for example, and if at the heart of what I do is the reality of an immanent dialectic, then it seems fitting to encourage an understanding of the standards of judgement I will apply to this developmental process, in a developmental way. In other words instead of applying a set of criteria to the work that I have done in education as represented in this thesis, it seems more authentic for me to reveal how the standards' development affects the processes of education itself as they occur, as well as in retrospect. In other words I want to develop responsive as well as diagnostic standards of judgement, to use them to point forward and then to help me to understand the significance of the educational processes I and the students and pupils have been involved in. One of the purposes of the Epilogues will be to look back at the educational standards of judgement and to see how they are changing, to distil meanings and to draw conclusions about the central values emerging in the creation of my own living educational theory.

One of the key concepts in this thesis is the importance of trying to present an authentic expression of the development of an educational process, although I recognise that I can only point towards the significance of a process after it has occurred and not during it. What I have discovered with my application of an aesthetic morphology is a way of analysing and coming close to a representation of what an immanent dialectic looks like. The aesthetic morphology - because of its relationship to development - is able to give voice to the contradiction at the heart of a dialectical process of

representation. It goes some way to bridging the dialectic between process and representation, between truth and time, and between action and significance.

I believe my educational values are only revealed in practice over time as I interact with new people and contexts. I would suggest that my educational standards of judgement have a similar morphology. Such a dialectical process - encouraging developmental educational standards of judgement from the ones I set out with - has the potential, then, not only to change the practice, but also the standards of judgement themselves. In this thesis I advocate a more dialectical relationship between the standards of judgement and the processes of education and believe that this exemplifies an immanent dialectic at work - the process by which meanings emerge through practice over time - which Whitehead (1989b), Evans (1995), and Hughes (1996) and I in this thesis would argue constitutes living educational theory. This thesis claims to make an original contribution to educational theory. One of the distinguishing features of this thesis' claim to original educational knowledge is in the living nature of its conclusions.

Therefore, I would like my action research to be judged by my own criteria as well as perceiving and integrating the values of others. I believe that the criteria by which we judge educational writing should not exist in a one-way relationship, but that the criteria themselves may be open to interpretation and change through the work of the individuals applying them. I believe that part of the rigour of my action research account should consist in its explicit ability to accord to, and subsequently explain, a set of developing standards of judgement. I develop this in detail in Part

Four.

As I stated before in the **Second Section** of this Introduction, my educational practice is largely comprised of four dimensions. These are my aesthetics, ethics, ontology and the emerging educational knowledge. I have now used those notions of 'aesthetics', 'ethics', 'ontology' and 'educational knowledge' as dimensions through which I am authentically able to represent my educational development and living educational theory in this thesis. I have focused my explanations through these four dimensions in the Epilogues. Thus in Part One the Epilogue is entitled 'My Aesthetics: A Question of Balance'; in Part Two the Epilogue is called 'My Ethics: A Question of Responsibility, Meaning and Awe'; the Epilogue to Part Three is headed 'My Ontology: A Question of Perspective'; and in Part Four the Epilogue is entitled 'My Educational Knowledge'. My aesthetic, ethical and ontological values have only emerged in the course of my educational practice over time (see the **First Section** of this Introduction and 5.3.3.) as I try to understand the significance of what it is I am doing in the name of education. Therefore I am able to show the stage of my own educational development which each Part of this thesis represents in terms of my aesthetic, ethical and ontological values as I try to explain what it is I know about my educational practice. And what I know is largely the results of my attempts to improve the quality of learning through the development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships.

Seventh: Original Claims to Educational Knowledge: an Aesthetic Appreciation

I would now like to go back to the three original claims to knowledge which this thesis is putting forward in order to consolidate the writing in this Introduction so far through an aesthetic perspective which, I hope, will unify the analytical parts into an organic and meaningful whole.

To remind you, here are the three original claims to educational knowledge:

- 1) The development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships has educational use-value in judging the quality of my educational practice;
- 2) The analysis of my own fiction is an ontological guide to my effectiveness in turning my educational values into action;
- 3) I am developing my own living educational theory through a synthesis of my ontological, aesthetic and ethical concerns.

I have attempted to write this thesis with attention to the beauty and clarity of my use of language in conveying educational meanings. I am saying that this thesis should be aesthetically pleasing. The unifying principle within the three claims I am making is the aesthetic significance of their representation and educational validity. However a problem arises when evaluating anything on aesthetic criteria (an idea I develop in Parts One and Two). As Gadamer (1975) says:

'the being of art cannot be determined as an object of an aesthetic awareness because, on the contrary, the aesthetic attitude is more than it knows of itself'. (my emphasis, p.104)

Åhlberg (1994), for example, says in relation to discussions about aesthetic

qualities in music, that music itself gives him:

'far less trouble than the philosophers of music.' (p.79)

To quote again from Diffey (1986) who says:

'The term 'aesthetic' is now taking on in general usage meanings and resonances which cannot be captured by restriction to that which pertains only to art and/or beauty.' (p.65)

In this thesis it is sometimes difficult to analyse the various aspects of aesthetic experience when such an analysis is in danger of destroying the unity which is at the heart of aesthetic experience. I like, by the way, the manner in which Foshay (1995) characterises the aesthetic:

- '1) What kind of work is this? (Do I admire this kind?)*
- 2) What is its form? (How do the elements fit together?)*
- 3) How do I sense it? (What is its appeal?)*
- 4) What does it express? (What is its aesthetic truth, its impact?)'* (p.199)

In a recent article he writes this:

'[something] is aesthetically sound in the sense that its form, content, style and structure fit one another exceptionally well, and that its substance is worth serious attention.' (Foshay, 1996:9)

In the thesis you are about to read, I take pains to try to focus form, content, style and structure in my educational life into a coherent whole

whose substance is worth serious consideration.

Gadamer (1975) is also helpful in this area of the aesthetic when he clarifies what he means by a work of art:

'it [a work of art] belongs so closely to that which it is related that it enriches its being as if through a new event of being.' (p.130)

I believe that my thesis should be judged as a work of art in the sense that it relays meanings in appropriate and engaging ways and can be judged using aesthetic criteria. In reading each of my three claims to educational knowledge I am asking you to bear Gadamer's, and now Bernstein's (1983) words in mind:

'It is not as if we are somehow detached or disinterested spectators looking upon 'objects' and seeking to purify our aesthetic consciousness by aesthetic differentiation. Rather there is a to-and-fro movement, a type of participation characteristic of our involvement with works of art.' (p.122)

Bernstein goes on to say:

'a work of art is essentially incomplete, in the sense that it requires an interpreter. And the interpreter is not someone who is detached from the work of art, but someone upon whom the work of art makes a claim.' (p.123)

Part Four stands apart from the rest of the thesis in some ways, in the

sense that it is concerned both with concluding the account of my educational development, as well as evaluating the learning which has gone on throughout the thesis.

However, the text is unified through several devices. One of those is through the inclusion of Prefaces and Epilogues which act as descriptions and explanations of each Part. Another, as I have mentioned, is through the inclusion in this resubmission of extracts of Coleridge's poem 'The Ancient Mariner'. You have already encountered it in its fullest form in The General Prologue. There I wove the story, symbolism, ethics and the theory of my own existence, my ontology, into the description and explanation of the lessons I spent helping my girls to improve their understanding of English through the exploration of the poem and its values. A deeper layer, and the one most significant to this thesis - my own living educational theory as an accounting to you of my own educational development - is in my own identification with the values underpinning the poem in my own life and educational development and how an exploration of the poem in action with the girls enables me to improve my practice. Because of the poem's ability to tap into my own ontological and ethical concerns, in a thesis concerned with accounting for such connections in a bid to improve my practice, its inclusion here is both relevant and aesthetically sound.

In this thesis I am contending that my claims to educational knowledge and their representation are open to validation in all the ways explained in this Introduction and that they are partly dependent upon your willingness to empathise with the values underpinning the descriptions and explanations put forward.

I am also maintaining that these three claims can be structured and altered through the ways in which they are represented (an idea which is at the heart of Eisner's thinking). I believe that an appreciation of this thesis is practicable if I am able to show the links between my claims to educational knowledge, the methods of validation and the standards of judgement brought to bear on those claims.

Because of my orientation to the standards of judgement I wish to be applied to my practice, I find Winter's (1989) six principles of rigour mostly appropriate as they offer broad and open guidelines to an explanation of the connection between principles, action and analysis within an action research account. Although I am happy for this thesis to be partly judged using these standards, I would still want to add an aesthetic principle. I believe it is not enough to fulfil all of these six principles of rigour, if at the end of this account I do not feel satisfied that the work has accorded to my own developmental standards of judgement in a manner convincing to myself. I term this principle an aesthetic one because, as I demonstrate throughout the thesis, one kind of aesthetic response is an holistic one which affirms the value of a piece of work. I believe with Kivy (1988) that my aesthetic response is a deeply personal one, which can bring me close to an identification with the values I bring with me to anything I write. I would want to be able to look back at this thesis and feel, essentially, 'Yes! That's what I wanted to say!' And it is in that spirit that this same educational standard of judgement was the one which I used as a basis in my work with my Year Nine English group, 1995, as I helped them to articulate their own educational standards of judgement as a bid to improve the quality of their work in English.

By learning what it means to apply the aesthetic as a standard of judgement in my own work in education, I am able to highlight the links I am making in my practice between the knowledge, the ethics, and my ontology in such a way as to create my own living educational theory from a story of my own educational development.

However, in the end, my educational life is full of individuals like Claire, Lizzie and Sarah in last year's Year Nine or Rebecca and Zoë in Year Seven this year. Writing this text has enabled me to come closer to understanding how I might improve the work that I do with them and others in order to help them lead a more fulfilling life. Writing this text and the research which has gone into it have revealed how important it is for me to ask educational questions with students and pupils and then to try to find ways of putting our ideas into action in order to improve what it is we are doing. Going public in this text and in related papers (Laidlaw, 1994b, 1994c, 1995a&b; Laidlaw and Whitehead, 1995) has ensured that I attempt to account for my actions, I try to improve the quality of what I am doing and I am not satisfied until I have tested the options which my research highlights. This research embodies one form of my commitment to the educational development of myself and others and represents my own living educational theory. It is a tale of suffering and joy, of despair and hope. I hope you will be able to identify with the tale I am about to recreate here. For like the Mariner at the end of his long and arduous journey, I can now say with delight:

*'Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?'*

Prologue to Part One

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill
Below the lighthouse top.'

June, 1996. When the Ancient Mariner sets off on his epic voyage, it is significant that he doesn't know where he is going. It is also symbolic that the ship leaves behind what is familiar - in the forms of religious and geographical knowledge - and sets out into the unknown. The voyage can be seen, of course, as an eloquent warning about what happens if tried and tested (i.e. valid) ways of relating to the world are rejected. I have always viewed the poem as a symbolic representation of an individual's search for meaning within a universe that has some fundamentally meaningful parameters which, in their apparent obscurity, lead to great learning. If all had been clear at the outset, the Mariner's journey would have been pointless. Paradoxically he must break the rules of Life in order to understand what they are. He sets out, supposedly, to find excitement and innovation and their connections with his own destiny, and comes eventually to value ethical relationships with others.

My research as a whole seems a bit like that. Part One of my thesis is very much like that. I had an intuition in July, 1990 that understanding more about the connections between various aspects of my educational practice, through an exploration of the aesthetic qualities in my educative relationships, would help me to improve my educational practice. I was driven by a sense of the new and exciting, little understanding the significance of the ethical and ontological learning I would assimilate until a few years after the events. It is in the evaluation of this section of

the thesis and the Conclusion to Part Four that the significance of what I am learning becomes most apparent to me and I hope to you.

Six years ago I went to the National Gallery in London. I walked in a half-hearted way around the paintings. It was a hot July day. I turned a corner and was confronted by 'The Execution of Lady Jane Grey' by Delaroche. I had to sit down. I sat and stared at the picture for probably about half an hour. I was reduced to tears and in a state of disbelief. The painting depicts a woman dressed all in white, apart from her black blindfold. Lady Jane Grey, queen for nine days after the death of Henry VIII, gropes towards the block on which she is to sacrifice her life, her arms splayed out blindly in front of her. Her ladies in waiting cry, and cannot look at her - they strain their faces and their bodies away from what is to come. A man stands in profile next to her reading from a book, presumably the Bible. And in the corner, impassive, waits the executioner with his bold axe.

I found the picture deeply disturbing. It made me angry and sad. It aroused pity and horror in me. The searing whiteness of the heroine's dress reached out of the canvas and I felt implicated in her fate. She is so helpless, surrounded by politics not of her own making. One of the ladies-in-waiting stands facing the wall, obviously in tears, unable to watch what is happening, her fists raised against the wall in impotent distress. All of the chamber is in shadow apart from Lady Jane, whose radiance shines out indomitably despite her situation. It is as if in her helplessness she triumphs over all the forces against her, through her goodness and simplicity.

As I gazed at the picture, trying to drink in every detail (and I have

described it here without having seen it for four years) I felt a surge of indignation. I wanted to save her from her fate. I felt anger at the forces which used her for their own political ends. I felt frustrated at my inability to do anything. The picture forced me to confront the reality it depicted. On the other hand, I felt cleansed by its idealism, by its portrayal of the transcendence of the human spirit in horrific circumstances. Lady Jane's dress alone was enough to evoke this reaction. At the time, however, I could not entirely work out why I was so pierced by it, but it entered my understanding and changed what it found there. It put me in touch with my own sense of justice and fairness. It confronted me with my own living contradictions (Whitehead, 1989b) and made me both sadder in the world that such things happen, and yet happier that human beings can aspire to such nobility and greatness. In addition it connected me to myself in ways I didn't understand then and which this thesis has become partly an attempt to explain. This has constituted part of my educational development because in becoming more aware of the ways in which I approach and value reality I am more capable of focusing my educational values in action in order to improve the quality of learning.

At the Gallery I observed the way the artist had used colour, tone and lighting, how he had arranged the people on the canvas, and how their body-language and their facial expressions contributed to the sense of doom. I was particularly struck by how no one looks at the heroine and that she is prevented from seeing. Within that suppression of sight, the artist seemed to be telling me something about moral blindness. I noticed the shapes of the costumes, the curves of the bodies, and contours of the arms and furniture, all leading to the central character, and yet at the same time denying her any personal warmth and recognition. Hardly anyone

touches her and she can see no one to touch. Indeed she gropes only to reach the executioner's block. The levels of denial of human warmth are, for me, excruciating. I recognised instinctively that the way the painting had been designed, the forms, structure, patterns and implications all underlined the aesthetic meanings I could derive from the picture

A few days later, as I sat and wrote about the experience in my journal, the phrase 'aesthetic morphology' popped into my head. I even had to go and look up 'morphology'! In my diary about that insightful moment, I wrote:

'So what does this mean for my Ph.D.? I think everything. I think that if I am able to bring to my educative relationships the same level of awareness that the picture evoked in me, then I will be able to improve the quality of those relationships. I haven't a clue how to do it, though. I don't even quite know what it is I need to do, but I know there is something in the awareness I was brought to with that picture that opens me up to the possibilities of goodness and truth and beauty in human existence. If I can understand those qualities more fully, then it follows that I will be able to increase their quality within my own relationships and thus increase their educational value.'

In the account you are about to read you will see me trying to find a way of representing my enquiry through an analysis of the Action Research Literature, some attempts at fictional writing and the analysis of several educative relationships. The context for this stage of the enquiry is in Initial Teacher Education. This section is also an exploration of the meaning of my educational values in action and a rationale for locating my enquiry within the individually-oriented action research paradigm. In

its concentration on some of my own living contradictions (Whitehead, 1989b) it reveals my inability at times to turn my values into action with my students. I emphasise the importance to my own educational development of the concentration on the students coming to speak for themselves on issues which concern them. To this end I quote many of the letters between an initial teacher education students, Sarah, and myself, in full in order to give you a flavour of the patterns in my educational practice which I will later be describing and explaining in this thesis. At this stage, I do not recognise the significance of drawing educational conclusions from my practice in order to improve it. I mistake quoting from Sarah in full for her speaking on her own behalf. It is only later in the thesis that I come to understand the necessity of developing a dialectic in my educational practice of power and educational knowledge within my educative relationships. I go into detail on this issue in Part Four of the thesis and in the Epilogue to that Part.

In Part One, however, I do show the beginnings of my own understanding about the ethical and aesthetic implications of a concentration on individual students and their speaking for themselves about the issues which concern them.

In the account of the growth of the action research movement in Part One I now think I didn't sufficiently show an awareness of the complexity of the movement, or of my own place within it. As a result, the educational knowledge which results seems to me now fragmented and limited. My own educational development is partly characterised by my understanding of the dialectic between my own emerging 'I' (Evans, 1995) and the action research cycle which grounds it. In each Prologue I will therefore highlight

the way in which I am learning about the dialectic between my understanding of the form of action research I am using and my own place within it.

In Part One I concentrate on the development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships based upon the above revelation represented to me through my aesthetic experience of the Delaroche painting. In this thesis, Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' deepens my understanding of my aesthetic experiences as I explain in the Epilogue to this Part. It was discovering Delaroche's painting which first alerted me, albeit unconsciously, to the incipient educational use-value of making connections between my ethical and ontological concerns in improving the quality of learning and in the creation of my own educational knowledge. However, it took nearly six years and a process of teaching 'The Ancient Mariner' before these intuitions became conscious in ways which I can now articulate and it is only in this resubmission that I am in a position to create my own living educational theory. It is the growth towards this explanation that constitutes my own educational development.

Part One (written in 1993)

A Search for my Educational Standards of Judgement: The
Aesthetic Morphology of my Educative Relationships.

The Creation of my own Living Educational Theory

How can I present the contextualisation of my own work in
education in a way which enables you to understand the
significance of my contribution to educational knowledge?

21.6.91.

Moirira: I feel that what I'm trying to do is something towards a new form of showing what the process of being in a dialectical process actually looks like and that has literally only become conscious through the writing. I think I have shown my educative relationship with Zac and through it my own educational development and I've done it in a dialectical form. I would say that that it's more true than any consciousness I am developing through the reading. I think that's the area I'm quite weak in...

Jack Whitehead:...Yes, perhaps what you need to do is engage with it. Perhaps you should ask yourself, 'How can this piece of literature help me in my educational development?'

Introduction

The following writing is intended to offer you a way in to my own Living Educational Theory. It is in two parts:

The first (A) deals with my own educational development through an analysis of some of the key literature and ideas which have influenced my own and others' thinking and acting in education. In this part I am asking you to follow me on a journey through the beginnings of my own thinking about education as a parallel to an analysis of various educational research paradigms. This results in the purposeful location of

my work within an individually-orientated action research approach, as exemplified by the Action Research Collection in the School of Education at the University of Bath.

Another reason for writing this whole section in this way is to demonstrate my belief that within the dialectic between theory and practice my experience has become more powerful than in previous years. It is praxis which gives shape and meaning to my work.

The second part (B) deals with my work in more detail with students who are engaging in action enquiries, and in fact, constitutes my claim to being an original contribution to a Living Educational Theory. The students who I am writing about in the most detail are Sarah (PGCE English, 1992-1993), Justine (PGCE History, 1991-1992), and Zac (Biological Sciences Undergraduate, 1990-1991).

At the beginning of this section I need to state unequivocally that my understanding of the literature, my presentation of it, and my emphases, are all the result of my own experiences, limitations, insights, personality, education and values. To present this section of the thesis as if it were separate from my own educational development would be an attempt to live in different worlds simultaneously. It would also infringe upon certain tenets in this writing as I show how it is I have come to locate my emerging claims to educational knowledge in the Action Research Resources collection as specified above. My devotion to individually orientated action research is not an arbitrary one by any means. My rejection of some of the literature which is largely taken as educational, is also not without deliberation. I may have come to action research work in

the School of Education by an intuitive route, but I see the whole of this thesis on one level as constituting a growing self-revelation about why it is I have pledged an allegiance to this type of action research. My educational development could be said to be characterised through the emerging consciousness of what I value about such a way of working. I see the way I work as responsive to some deeply held educational values which have led to the adoption of personal assumptions and norms and the rejection of alternatives which could have the power to impose upon me a view of the world which, through my limitations, insights, personality, education and values I will not accept. I view these alternatives (which I will be stipulating clearly later) as antipathetic to a view of education and educative relationships in which my truth is partly constituted through the dialectic between the responsibility and the ethics of my practice. Carr and Kemmis (1983) write:

'It would be a mistake to believe that a correct interpretation of theory and practice can be elucidated in a way that assumes that the history of these concepts is only of secondary or incidental importance. Understanding the meaning of these concepts is, in part, understanding the role they play in constituting the particular styles of thought in which they have been, and still are, embodied.' (p.8, my emphasis)

I would only add to the above quotation that my interpretations of the educational writings of myself and others are indicative of my own influences, acknowledged or not, and my consequent stance towards educational knowledge.

What I would like to do is take the reader through some avenues of the

literature through which I have come to understand my own place in an educational world. It will lead, I believe, to the point at which I can say what it is I do want from educational literature, educational practices and my educative relationships, and how I believe that this thesis is a small answer to some of the criticisms I will be raising. I will present my understanding through a progressive focusing on the areas of educational writing in which I am interested: action research, educative relationships, educational narratives and an aesthetic standard of judgement in my educational processes. I will then present the story of my educative relationship with Sarah (1992/93) and judge it through an aesthetic morphology.

I wish to emphasise however, that in presenting the writing in this way, I am not giving credence to the notion that practice is preceded by theory. Certainly in my own educational life, that has not been the case. I hope that you will gain some insight into the parallel nature of my learning, through simultaneous theory and practice. Read on!

A: How can I find the appropriate narrative technique?

I have decided to present this whole section of the thesis as a narrative. In this way I can retain what is to me a vital authenticity. I see aspects of this section as Morrison (1987) does, as:

'a kind of literary archeology: on the basis of some information and a little guesswork, you journey to a site to see what remains were left behind and to reconstruct the world that these remains imply. (p.112)

But also I want to adhere to the notion of Clandinin and Connelly (1991) that:

'One of our questions in narrative inquiry is how to make the study of a person's education theoretically interesting.' (p.262)

In addition I want to enable the following (Clandinin, 1992) to become a natural growth within this section as I hope it is throughout the thesis:

'In the accounts of research, issues of representation and audience are central concerns...One purpose of narrative research is to have other readers raise questions about their practices, their ways of knowing. Narrative inquiries are shared in ways that help readers question their own stories, raise their own questions about practices and see in the narrative accounts stories of their own stories. The intent is to foster reflection, storying and restorying for readers...(to) suggest new truths especially the extent to which all living is a creative act of greater or less authenticity, hindered or helped by the fictions to which we submit ourselves.' (pp 135 - 136)

The Crafting of Educational Narratives

I am going to start with the first fictional story that I wrote in March 1989, first because it is a convenient starting point in terms of chronology and secondly it is significant on a number of different levels. I believe that it can be read as the search for a reality which will enable the knower to find existential fulfilment. Symbolically it frames a beginning, through which an end can better be understood and interpreted.

A Child out of Time

There was once a child who was unlike others. Let me explain. As a child she had all those aspects of innocence and purity that were once considered to be precious, but had in the last Age been supposed to connote unformedness and unfinishedness. However that wasn't the area in which she was mainly considered unlike. No, she saw things that others could not see and therefore considered unreal, and she felt things that others could not feel and therefore considered unnatural.

What, then, could this child do, in a world which once would have treasured her and now was only able to regard her with fear and suspicion? This was the trauma of her life, and one that she despaired of ever being able to overcome, surrounded as she was by people who were products only of their age and not of the whole of her civilisation. Not for them was the mystical union with Nature, or a sense of connectedness with something greater than themselves. Not for them was the sense of reverence and awe about aspects of Creation which would never be definable in mere words. Not for them was a painful longing for this beauty to permeate into all areas of Life, for if this beauty ever did touch them, they would shake it off in confusion and shame, so distorted were their intuitions about the world.

The child dreamt of another life, but these dreams were fleeting and ungraspable. Whenever she felt able to define her dreams, they melted away in the words she used, and anyway, other people soon backed away in insecurity and mistrust every time she attempted it.

For many years this continued until the child felt she must indeed be unlike. And to be unlike was the worst conceivable sin. And yet, somewhere deep inside she felt that her intuitions were true, not measurable perhaps, not like the measurability which others demanded in every area of Knowledge to prove Truth, but still true in another way, a way she despaired of ever defining.

This might have continued for many more precious years, were it not for a chance meeting with someone who told her, on her broaching the usual subject, that there were others like her who lived a long way away - over the hills and far away! The child conceived a plan. She would go and search for these people whoever they were, and that if they did not want her, then she would no longer want to live. She would tell them of her life, all the loneliness, all the longing, all the heartache, and she would

watch them closely for their reactions. If they showed a distaste, like everyone else, then she would take her own life, for it was a thing of little moment, and of no use to woman nor beast. If she could not be like them, then she saw no point in her existence.

Carefully, then, she made her preparations. She must not let anyone suspect her, lest they try to prevent her from going. She must act as they did, to mask her real feelings and needs, and adapt herself to the needs only of the majority.

Then one day she realised that the time was right. She could not understand why. Perhaps it was the feeling of being stifled, but then, she was always that. Perhaps it was the feeling that others regarded her with more than the usual suspicion. Perhaps it was the feeling that she had nothing to lose, although that had seemed the case for as long as she could remember. Or perhaps, quite simply, the time was right. Whatever the reason, early one morning she left with a heart as light as any she could remember, and taking only a very few items with her she began to climb the hills that insulated her valley from the rest of the world.

For many days she climbed. Whenever she reached the top of the nearest hill, she realised that there were other hills to be ascended before she would be able to see what lay ahead. At first she was enraptured by the beauty around her. Birds of exotic hues wheeled above her, and the air was fragrant with the scent of early blossom. The grass and moss beneath her feet yielded gently as she climbed, and although the way was arduous, she breathed in an air which exhilarated and refreshed her.

However when she reached the summit of a particularly steep and exhausting hill and saw a patchwork of gradients still to be ascended, she sat down, despondent and discouraged. Would she never reach the top? Was she on a fool's errand? Perhaps there was nothing more in the world after all, and all the people in the valley had been right after all. But then she remembered what she had been told. Somewhere lived people like her. Somewhere she would not be unlike...Or had the other person been lying? The child put her head in her hands and wept.

Suddenly she knew she was not alone. She did not know how she knew it. Perhaps she sensed a faint aura of encouragement around her. Perhaps she heard the quietest sound that was yet a sound. Or perhaps the presence spoke. Whatever it was, she looked up and found another child standing beside her. This child was as dark as she was fair, was as calm as she was disquieted, and stood looking down at the forlorn,

crouching figure with infinite pity in the gentle eyes.

At once the child began to tell her story, pouring into it all the anguish of her plight, moved to tears by her exhaustion and desire for acceptance. The presence listened, at no time interrupting, or even changing her expression of calm, but at the end of it all, the child knew that she had not found what she was looking for. Again she did not know why she had not found it. Perhaps she had expected a response, although she had only known responses of rejection before. Perhaps it was her tiredness. Or perhaps she had not found what she was looking for after all, and must continue her search for that elusive meaning to all her dreams.

The next few weeks were spent in climbing, in occasional encounters that were not conclusive, and with a growing sense of futility. And yet she persevered. She no longer had any clear idea at all of what she was looking for. Now she rarely noticed the ineffable beauty around her. She rarely heard the mellifluous bird-songs of joy above her head or noticed the verdant richness of the soil and the grasses beneath her feet. The way seemed to be levelling out, though, and in that she found a numb consolation.

Weeks passed. Each one like the last. There were few events that engaged her imagination now. She had almost forgotten why she was there at all, and if anyone had asked her she would have replied that she was a fool like the rest of the world's fools, going on a fool's errand, she knew not whence.

One evening she was descending a gentle incline. A hard day's walking lay behind her, as arduous as the landscape, and the child sat down upon the grass, beyond tears, beyond hopes, beyond anything. She sat.

As she sat, she became aware, although for many minutes she would not respond to it inside, of the desire to look up, and to find out what it was that called to her inside. At last she did. There in front of her spread out against the sky like a sheaf of copper corn upon a sea of gold, was a sunset, the like of which she had never seen. It was so irradiant that tears formed uncontrollably in her eyes. Perhaps it was because of her weariness, but she had felt like that for months now. Perhaps it was because she could not believe what she saw, but she knew it was not that. It was what she had been looking for. And as she defined that inside her mind, she realised where she was. There stretched below her was her valley. She had gone so far only to come home again. She had gone full circle. It was her valley. But as she walked into it, she realised that,

although it looked superficially like her valley, somehow it was not. She saw beauty where there had seemed to be none before. No one recognised her, however, and when she glanced in a mirror, she hardly recognised herself. Her face was wiser and calmer, and without the tension that she had always felt before. People listened to her with respect, or if they didn't she hardly noticed. She spent the rest of her life discovering more in the valley and telling others what was there.

And although the child was not only a child anymore, she lived happily ever after.

When I studied for my M.Ed. here at the University of Bath (1988-1989), I started writing narratives for the first time in my life. I was haunted by the idea of the above story. I recognised at the time that it represented a metaphorical answer to the questions that I was posing myself during my academic work, but that the study itself was not providing me with the answers I valued or could even recognise. And for the first two years of my M.Phil research, I was, without really consciously understanding it, trying to find a way of expressing my insights through a narrative structure that would not decrease the ontological and educational authenticity of what I was writing about (Laidlaw, 1991d). I wrote dozens of short stories of a fantasy nature (1991-1992), which I presented to Jack Whitehead, my supervisor, in the absence of more obviously educational narratives. Their creativity and subject matter, however, was not irrelevant to my own educational development, although I could not see it at the time. The stories largely dealt with people coming to terms with unusual occurrences which forced them to reconsider their preconceptions. They were also concerned with individuals trying to preserve their dignity and sense of self in a world which did not understand or value their uniqueness. Wisely, my supervisor encouraged my writing. I look back now and the significance of this phase seems very

obvious, but at the time I lived in a world in which I was just beginning to make conscious some of my most fundamental values and to understand my responsibility for them in my educational life. I did not see the direct link between my growing consciousness of personal responsibility and negotiating my meanings with others, like my students in the work I was doing with them. Instinctively, though, I did recognise the importance of finding a way of written communication that did not detract from the reality I wanted to portray. As I hope the whole of this part of the thesis will show, my learning has developed most securely through the relationships I have had with my students. It can be expressed, however, through the ways in which my fiction writing has developed in a parallel way to my understanding of the potential for narrative to be an educational form which could become a way of communicating deeply significant values. I feel that much of my fiction was a device I used in order to communicate only with myself. My narrative development can be seen to be constituted through an understanding of the significance of communicating my educational values in action with others and to others; and that narrative should be a written form of this truth. But I am leaping ahead of myself here. Let me begin at the beginning.

I read copiously on the subject of educational narratives because I was desperate to find a way of revealing my own and my students' educational development which did the complexity justice, without obscuring anything meaningful to the people involved. And I wrote story after story in an attempt to consolidate what I was understanding. Although it has to be said that I didn't follow such a seemingly conscious course: I had ideas and intuitions which I needed to explore and I did it fictionally for about three years. The stories were spontaneous and rarely the result of careful

planning. I would often write more than 5,000 words a day, sitting down in the morning with little idea of what I wanted to write. I would have one idea and a story would form around it.

At the same time I was trying to evolve a way of writing about my work with Zac which would satisfy not only a sense of narrative authenticity but an aesthetic one too. I started reading such people as Shulman (1992), Carter (1992), Clandinin (1992), Noddings and Witherell (1991), and they were a breath of fresh air. I believe such writings are of enormous benefit to the creation of a form of knowledge which can landscape and contextualize people's educational experiences in ways which have value not only for them but in their dissemination, to others who are searching as I have been, for new and appropriate ways of expressing educational and existential concerns.

During the academic year 1991-1992 my work with one student, Justine, highlighted the need for what Shulman terms, 'a landscape of cases'. In his address to the American Educational Research Association Conference in 1992, he talked about:

'The written cases go nowhere unless they become not only objects of reflection by the writers, the new teachers, who begin to connect their cases to other cases in the literature that share genre similarity with them. Now there's something to compare it to. '

Furthermore he cited the need for:

'ways in which learning to teach becomes a form of enquiry and

scholarship engaged in by new teachers and leaving behind a legacy of cases for future teachers to work with, learn from, and begin to build into their own landscape.'

This was resolved finally into the question:

'How do we develop a strategy for developing what I am now going to call a syntax of cases so that as you criss-cross this landscape you have a sense that there's a structure there?'

Rudduck (1991) is also concerned with the notion of landscape, and writes that:

'student teachers must be helped to understand the balance of generalisation and uniqueness that characterises the different situations that they encounter in schools and classrooms and to see how and why it is important to learn not just to cope with the variety and to learn from it.' (p.329).

However, she goes on to quote Hextall et al (1990):

'a reflective teacher can produce accounts of how their actions in the classroom are coherent with their personal, professional stance.' (p.330)

In my first story cited above, the landscape depicted is an internal one, remote and distant from others, seeking landmarks but not knowing how to recognise them. The journey is one of spirit and psyche unrelated to action in the world. It is interesting that there is no representation of

negotiation in the narrative. People talk only to themselves. It is a search for self understanding only, but predicated upon a belief that this can be done in isolation.

Justine and I had an interesting conversation last year (21.5.92) about the reasons why a contextualisation of her own final report through the work of people like Shulman might add a necessary dimension to her work:

J. But when you sort of say, write a story, it almost seems too good to be true. To do this as your 'Special Study'. I mean, I'm actually looking forward to writing it. ...This is a bit of a luxury really. That I've actually been given the time to do it.

M. The thing is, it's a story, it's a narrative, but it's a narrative with discipline.

J. Yes.

M. It's just as complex as writing a short novel, or writing a very good short story. If you read this here, (pointing to Lee Shulman transcript) there are things here which actually refer to what we're talking about. (reads) 'How do we develop a strategy for developing what I am now going to call a syntax of case studies? You're writing a case-study...so that as you criss-cross this landscape you have a sense that there's a structure there?'

J. Right, yeah.

M. That's precisely what you're doing. But it is a story in as much as you could literally state: I am going to tell you the story of my educational development over the last nine weeks and how I have tried to promote pupil learning, using my experience with one pupil as an example. You see, you can do it and be as 'informal' as that.

J. Uh huh.

M. *You don't have to use a lofty, educational-jargon style.*

J. Right.

M. *But we do expect the literature to be in there, because it is part of an academic course and because other people have something to say of relevance about the experiences that initial teachers go through.*

I believe that in locating one's insights into the literature is not simply an academic exercise but can reveal one's own particular orientation more clearly to a reader. It also provides parameters and these are educational as long as they do not distort individual 'truth' and sacrifice it to preconceived notions for any other reasons than the pursuit of educational truth and understanding. Many of the students (1991-1992) contextualised their final reports through Shulman's ideas and this was for me, as well, a breakthrough. When Zac and his contemporaries wrote their reports, we had not discussed contextualisation through a narrative form, and indeed, I had not understood its significance. Linking case-studies into a landscape in which we '*could sense there was a structure there*', enabled me to frame my developing understanding of the theoretical implications of case-study work with my own students for the future. In my diary I wrote about Justine's and another historian Katie's report (1992: 17):

'6.6.92. ..the way in which they have both acknowledged the significance of their writing, and contextualised it within a growing tradition. Jack's been talking to me about that for months. I only now start to see the implications of building up a collection of narratives which shows individuals coming to terms with their own emerging

knowledge. How empowering that is. How powerful that is. And next year, I can show the students the basis from which they can construct their own narratives.'

In my facilitation with Sarah, I had understood the significance of contextualisation much more and presented the students right from the beginning, the text of Shulman's AERA conference address in a booklet about writing their extended essay through an action research process (Laidlaw, 1992g). What is interesting to me now as I review the conversation above, is that it represents a dialogical form of representation, which seems to me that many narrative exponents overlook. Narrative with negotiation (which in a sense constitutes dialogue) is a path I want to follow. Diary entries are all very well, but they are monologues. For example in my literature searches I have not been able to find examples of educational narratives in which the process of writing does not supercede a reality which is instantly recognisable. By this I mean, that so much thought is put into a careful presentation, that individual learners' voices seem to be subsumed under a mountain of sophistication by the controllers of the discourse, i.e. the academics. I was always supremely conscious about my responsibility not to write about others in ways which violated their own sense of the processes and their feelings and ideas about them. I did not understand at the time what this fear signified (and I write about that in the location of my work in the individually-orientated action enquiries in the action research collection at the School of Education at the University of Bath). However, I knew that there was something of vital importance in this reluctance to speak on behalf of others. At times I despaired of ever managing to create an educational narrative which was authentic in terms of all the ways in

which it could be understood by those who had taken part in the processes leading up to it. I kept escaping into metaphor: it seemed comforting after what appeared to me to be the cold and arid realms of educational literature in which I could not recognise my own experience and insights. My fictional writing, which has been prolific and creative, and I believe sometimes also of a good quality, has enabled me to tell my story through metaphor. But metaphor was not enough for me in the end. I care about honesty and authenticity. Grumet (1987, in Noddings and Witherell, 1991) writes:

'Crafty tellers try to avoid getting caught. They wriggle out of their stories like a snake shedding old skins, Sartre says (1966), celebrating negation as the foundation of human consciousness. Settling into our stories is in bad faith, he warns us; it is capitulating, forgetting that there is a face beneath the mask. The politics of narrative is not, then, merely a social struggle but an ontological one as well. We are at least partially constituted by the stories we tell to others and to ourselves about experiences.' (p.137)

I care about telling the truth, not simply avoiding telling lies. It is in the dialectic between these two realities that my educational narrative resides,

I reflected a great deal about the moral implications of my actions in education: it seemed to me that educational narratives were also, as I have explained before in the thesis, moral undertakings, and that they should represent ways in which practitioners come to terms with moral questions. I turned to such literature as Gilligan et al, (1988), in which aspects of moral responsibility are discussed as they impact on different

professional relationships, quite specifically from women's perspectives. It is written in order to counteract:

'the costs of detachment and dispassion in the face of what is most intensely passionate and personal.' (p. vii).

This ostensibly 'passionate and personal' book, however, contains tables and numbers, the sort of data I associate with detachment, not engagement. There are extracts from personal journals to do with decisions to be made, which seem to me to be approaching a form of narrative closer to a personal search for meaning. However, many of the respondents are not named. There is an anonymity about much of the presentations which defies the initial stated desire.

I could not find a way of expressing moral decisions in an academic framework either, but I carried these moral dilemmas into my fiction as seems clear now when I look back at the stories I was writing in March - May of last year. All of my stories are linked, it seems to me, by the exploration of who has the moral responsibility for actions in the world, and in the name of what. The conclusion to one of them should indicate the kinds of preoccupations which I was not yet able to translate into my writing about my work with students with anything like the degree of psychological and ontological authenticity.

Dragons and Dreams

...The dragon looked around in confusion, saw the happy children and their friends, the winged creatures dancing sprightly around and around

with something which looked like glee. She then turned and looked at the villagers beginning to stir, their grimy, unhappy faces turned towards the day with a look of hopelessness.

"Why does it have to be one or the other?" she said softly to herself. "You don't need me after all, and every dragon needs to be needed. They need me more than you do. I need to go to them."

"But they'll not accept you. They won't even see you," said Morwen.

"But I have to try, don't you see?" the dragon said, her heart heavy.

As she glided slowly up into the air, her tears dripping from her face, she looked down at the beauteous little throng of shining spirits and realised what she was leaving, and she turned her face to other areas of the village who did not then, and might never, know what she was giving up for them. She had to try. Her long loneliness and isolation from any companionship had shown her the value of her own magic in her life. She could not deny it to others. She landed softly and turned her face towards the crowd.

For the first time in one of my stories, I am acknowledging a profound link between personal knowledge and responsibility but because it is fiction, I still control the discourse, the plot, characterisation and significance. It is in the work of people like Margot Ely et al (1991) that I have found a perspective which begins to free me from the yoke of fiction. She has been influential in putting forward the notion that:

'your job is to create a text in which the person or persons you learn about come to life. This means that you have a tremendous responsibility to be true to their meanings. The written presentation is of crucial importance: in a deep sense, what one writes is what

happened and what was learned.' (p.67)

She goes on to say:

'The point for us to remember, of course, is that the ongoing mental act of interpreting is here consciously harnessed in the service of presenting the context we have studied as fully and richly as possible... Although our aim is to portray natural settings and phenomena, the writing is crafted. It is a construction by an author.'

(p.68)

My stories achieved, at best, an authenticity in which I could recognise my own struggles. By using metaphor alone, however, my writing confined itself, to rhetoric. In the recent 'Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN) Critical Conversations: the Role of Self in Action Research', (1993) I take Whitehead's point in response to Margot Ely's writing: 'Write On Stories about Telling it':

'I think its rhetoric masks a dialectical truth about the stories of the action researchers in the educational community I belong to.' (p.131)

Yes, but there is a vividness about her writing which lends her ideas a vigour which I believe to be essential for educational writers who are trying to portray dynamic worlds. I aspire towards a form of educational narrative in which rhetoric and reality achieve an aesthetically unifying wholeness. My own stories were well crafted, sometimes well written, but the values which I aspired to were in written form only. They did not manifest themselves in any way which I could use to enhance the quality

of learning with my students. In other words I had also in my own way achieved a pleasing rhetoric, but had yet to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality in my educational life. I had to try and use my literary skills and re-create for readers the worlds of myself and my students.

For me, this move from fiction to educational narrative has something to do with care, I believe. My focus was for years on the beautiful forms I could create in my imagination, and the ideas I could give voice to. They did not have to conform to others' ideas of reality. Eisner (1993) had this to say about the shift of focus dictated through care:

'Those children became more important to me than the crafting of images, and I came to believe then as I believe now, that the process of image-making could help them discover a part of themselves that mostly resides in their unconsciousness. Art was a way of displaying to the children, I believe...the dimensions of themselves that I desperately wanted them to discover.' (p. 5)

Until the work I could do with my students became more important to me than the work I could produce through my imagination alone, until I could receive their final reports with the same kind of heartfelt gratitude with which I received a literary idea, I would continue to write fiction and struggle to find academic expression as if they were separate. What I now recognise I needed was the sense that Maxine Greene (1986) writes about:

'struggling to connect the undertaking of education...to the making and remaking of a public space, a space of dialogue and possibility.' (xi)

My own educational narratives could become themselves the focus for this creative energy, which was to me, for those three years, a life-giving force. In the section about my work with Sarah, I think you will see the enthusiasm with which I was engaging with her and the other students' realities. To write fiction I engaged just with my own reality. In my work this year, I am claiming to be engaged with the work and lives of my students, and that it is this quality and representation of engagement which is itself educational.

Shulman (1992) makes a plea for crafted narratives which attempt to tell the lives of educators in what is seen by the writers as an authentic manner, as he sees them constituting the next logical step in the patchwork of educational accounts. The keywords here are authenticity and verisimilitude, qualities which Kathy Carter also calls for in her address at the same conference (AERA 1992). In my own research into such narratives I am struck by their attempts to bring together the breathing of life into an educational account with its purpose. I also, however, recognise some contradictions. Recent educational literature has given us extremes in the realm of narrative writing. Goodson's 'Studying Teachers' Lives' (1992) is a clear example of the theory/practice contradiction which permeates not only content and form, but meanings. He states that:

'we need to listen closely to their views on the relationship between 'school life' and 'whole life' for in that dialectic crucial tales about careers and commitments will be told.' (p.16)

This book is significant because it takes the view that teachers' lives are

wholly relevant to the decisions and value-systems which are taken in the educational context by the teachers themselves as they act out and create their educational careers from the raw material of their own biographies. Where I believe the book is limited is in the lack of analysis of the synthesis between the biographies and their intentional actions. This is interesting given Goodson's own stated aim to increase:

'an undeveloped literature on the personal, biographical and historical aspects of teaching. Particularly undeveloped is a literature which locates the teachers' lives within a wider contextual understanding.'

(p.234)

I am disappointed with what I see as a significant omission - that there is no evidence brought forward from Goodson's own life about how it has affected his own life in education. There has always seemed to me an indefensible anomaly in advocating something for others which one is not doing oneself (Henry, 1993). In my reading of Shulman for example, I was heartened to find that the narrative approach stresses the empowerment of individuals in discovering the relationship between self and values. However, just as in my stories, it is in the area of representation that I perceive their limitations. If they do not examine the cases of their own educational development with their students then I am not sure how much I can take on trust. In his article in 1990, Whitehead also took issue with Jean Rudduck (Whitehead, 1990) for this very reason and advocates a form of educational narrative in which the voices of students are not always interpreted through the words of the academic. It is ironic that I sought answers from academics who would usually offer me largely propositional forms of representation which were, in fact,

denying some of the very aspects which they advocated in educational narratives. My own stories were also operating at this level which perceived reality constructed from the insights of individuals, but in all the above literature I have referred to and cited, the representations do not take for granted the potential for negotiation to determine meanings: I don't want to tell others about the value of writing in a negotiated way, the educational insights I and my students have, I simply want to do it.

In presenting my fiction to my supervisor as evidence of thinking about my research, I clearly felt somewhere that these narratives had some value. I advocated collaborative enquiry and negotiated understandings of reality, and yet my narratives, fiction and academic, were largely projections of my own thinking and creativity. In my earlier writing there is little obvious assimilation of the idea of dialogue as a pivotal point of meaning, and yet, like the writers cited above, I would write **about** the importance of dialogue. Not only could this be accused of being ontologically inauthentic, but it lapses into the old schism between theory and practice which this type of educational telling is supposed to circumvent. For example, in the paper I wrote about my work with Zac (1991b), I aimed to show how I had facilitated his action enquiry, but merely ended up revealing to myself my own educational values. This is not simply an ego problem but a lack of understanding that to reveal another human being, in this case Zac, even in a written form, requires a way of thinking about the educational nature of the processes in which we were engaged which would have required greater negotiation throughout the process leading up to, and including, the writing itself.

In the following narrative, then, I want to remain true to my perceptions

through my own research and my reading, that authentic educational narratives consist of crafted stories in which all parties recognise themselves, and perceive their own educational development. Thus although I am the writer of this thesis, I must still ensure that Sarah, Justine, Zac and others, recognise those aspects which concern them, as valid within their own perceptions too.

I will look now at various aspects of educational research in order to show clearly the significance and scope of my own research. You will have to see whether the narrative form reflects the changes in perceptions and insights which I have gained over my sixteen years in education as it becomes clearer to me how I can best live out my educational values in all aspects of my educational life - narrative form, constituting one aspect of the whole spectrum along which I seek to improve the quality of learning for myself, my students and their pupils.

Why a Qualitative Approach to Educational Research?

This was never really an issue for me. I could never accept a view of reality which was predicated upon facts and values being separate. This was understood by me as the way in which, in some educational research in earlier decades, people appeared to become numbers and statistics, and the objects of the research of others. I always perceived education as value-laden and from the beginning of my formal involvement with becoming an educator I rejected very strongly any attempts to coerce me into a view of educational validity being determined by adherence to number systems. Kitwood (1976) referred to a dilemma that I also felt keenly where I did my PGCE at Cambridge (1977-78):

'Educational research is intended to provide objective, scientific knowledge. Why is it that so many of its findings fail to appear convincing or relevant to those who are directly involved in education?' (p.69) (My emphasis)

His article represents a milestone for its questioning of the norms at the time of writing. These were assumptions based on empirical standards of judgements to be applied to educational settings. He alludes to educational research writing in the following way:

'The general presentation of papers follows the pattern established by the physical and biological sciences, complete with measurements and appropriate tests of significance. The newcomer to the field and indeed the unwary practitioner, may well gain the impression that a cumulative body of objective knowledge about education is being built up.' (p.73)

This therefore lead to a situation in which accumulated knowledge about research into education was validated through its adherence to preset criteria derived from disciplines and methodologies other than education. He was referring in particular to researchers such as Anderson who in 1951, referred to 'the science of education' and went on to posit the following analogy and terms of reference:

'the study of education...(and) the part played by theory in the development of the natural sciences.' (p.2)

I remember at Cambridge feeling sheer indignation when presented with

the type of article Kitwood describes. One of them was about learning spelling in a classroom with mixed-ability eleven year olds. In this article (I don't have the reference) no child's name was mentioned. Method and grids were the answer to the quest for 'truth'. The references went on for pages. Sentences in this writing were punctuated by long lists of names and dates in parentheses which for me subsumed any semantic or common-sense level of engagement. There were numerous tables of figures and computations. I simply felt rage that this was being presented at all. I could not articulate the affront, the indignity I felt it to be to the reality which I was experiencing in the classroom and had experienced for a year teaching in a German Gymnasium. It presented itself as truth. It was literally 'blinding with science'. The tutor did not present it as flawless, but as one attempt to present 'the truth'. I just refused to engage with it, as being beneath contempt: it was an alien landscape in which I was expected to locate my own practice. I felt impotent rage instead! This was born out of both fear and paradoxically a sense of superiority. I wish now I had engaged with it. I might have learnt earlier to articulate my own understandings; I might have learnt something along the way. My educational development might not have been such a slow, laborious process.

It is apposite that although I wrote regularly in a diary, my only entry on this particular incident was *'It was a really disgusting article. Nothing wholesome or natural about it. Told me nothing.'* I didn't note which article, or anything else which could have substantiated in a more helpful fashion, my antipathies. I did not analyse what I meant by natural, nor what it ought to have told me. It is relevant that my understanding of the necessity for systematic note-taking comes only very much later. My

understanding of the significance of this will emerge in this section. In fact the article could have told me a great deal, but I failed to understand, as so often, the ramifications of such a form of representation. I did not understand the importance of engaging with other ways of thinking. I did not see it as imperative for my own educational development.

Kitwood then went on in his 1976 article to express three propositions which would, in his view, counteract the negative effects of the imposition of an inappropriate methodology and forms of reasoning on educational research. These were:

'First, that research must be centrally concerned with education itself; second, that the conception of the human being implicit in research must be one in which human powers are acknowledged; third, that fresh standards of acceptability must be established, based on a more intelligent understanding of the nature, scope, and limits of scientific inquiry.' (p.69)

At the BERA conference in 1977, Brian Simon's presidential address (Simon, 1978) was to take this up and make a plea for educational research to focus wholly on education itself. I was at Cambridge at an exciting time for research and I had no idea! I lived in a world dominated by 'instinctive' reactions to children in classrooms. I didn't have anything like a coherent educational philosophy. I lived from heart to child. Unfortunately (and I actually mean this) I was awarded The Lowman Memorial Prize at Cambridge for being the best English student of the year. (There were about forty of us.) 'Best' was not qualified, but I felt secure in my educative relationships with pupils and perceived no need to study

my own professional practice. Indeed it never even occurred to me. My academic record had never been outstanding. I had always perceived myself (and still do) as a slow learner. But here at last I was successful! Cambridge said so, so I must be! I enjoyed teaching, I enjoyed warm relationships with pupils, and we did some exciting work together. What more could there be? I felt instinctively that my response to teaching was the only necessary contradiction to a view of education promulgated by the (unnamed) article discussed above. I wasn't aware at the time that there could be a view of knowledge which derived from systematic research by practitioners into their own practice. If I had known then the meaning of the word 'epistemology' I would have laughed at the notion that as a teacher I ought to have one made conscious through systematic research.

What about the Disciplines Approach?

That educational research was not necessarily coined from education as a form of knowledge in its own right was not new when I was at Cambridge although I remember taking little notice in the lectures and seminars. In the sixties and seventies, such knowledge was defined by Paul Hirst and Richard Peters (1970) in terms of the disciplines approach, in which educational knowledge was seen as being derived from forms of knowledge outside the field of education itself, such as from the sociology, philosophy, psychology and history of education. Education was not seen as a form of knowledge in its own right but as forms of knowledge whose conceptual frameworks constituted the methods of validation. Although Peter's research and work on education made it clear he advocated a relationship between research and practice, the following shows the subordination of practical knowing to theoretical knowing, a distinction

which is described by Louis Arnaud Reid (1980) as 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'. Peters (1964) wrote:

'The differentiated modes of thought about education, though harnessed to practical issues, must also be presented in a way that they intimate, and are seen to intimate, problems, at a more fundamental level in the disciplines themselves, and the forms of enquiry necessary for their solution.' (p. 140)

Hirst's and Peters' views of educational knowledge and research were predicated upon a researcher's ability to analyse and break down into component parts what was happening in a practical setting whilst simultaneously relating this to the forms of knowledge as cited above. This meant that research into educational practice itself, was not seen as creating knowledge but instead as adhering or not (and thus valid or not) to principles drawn from the disciplines of education. Therefore the standards of judgement (an important term for me, to which I will come back later) were themselves mirrors of the underlying thinking which constituted the content of education as it was perceived by these academics. An empirical approach to educational research demands that validity be tested through its adherence to methodologies and conceptual frameworks used in sciences, and an applied sciences approach would validate results which gave evidence complying with the forms and construction of knowledge demanded of research into engineering or medicine.

'Ethics and Education' (Peters, 1966) was a set-text at Cambridge in 1977. I read it carefully. I couldn't make much sense of it. I wrote in my diary at

the time: *'What has this book got to do with real children in real classrooms?'* I see that comment now as actually quite profound. But I had no understanding at all why such an insight was significant. I think this comment is a precursor to a type of understanding that I was able to develop in my educational research at Bath later which has led to this thesis. But then I simply rejected the book because it seemed to have nothing to say. It was no substitute to real live children in classrooms. I see this view as erroneous now, although the ideas presented in it, however inappropriate I consider their presentation, still resonate deeply in terms of their ethical conclusions.

Conversely I also read A.S. Neill's (1968) *'Summerhill'* by choice. No one recommended it. I found it by accident and read it in a kind of disbelief, that here was someone who wrote about reality in a way that put up no barriers between me and the text. For me then the text was transparently beautiful, true and good. I wrote in my diary: *'I can't put it down. It's the way he writes as well as what he writes. Someone who's in education because he loves children and not just his own ideas about them.'* This literature was considered eccentric and of little practical or theoretical value. It did have a value to me, however, and it is mentioned over the years in my diary as a benchmark of fairness in my treatment of children in the classroom. An approach to children that I sought to emulate for some years. Although it has now to be said that my understanding of Neill as well as of myself, was somewhat scant at that time. I read into it what I wanted, which in retrospect seems to have been an escape from arbitrary authority in the classroom. I did not until recently understand the practical differences which a distinction between freedom and licence called for, and that metamorphosis of understanding I will also return to

later.

Towards the end of my first year of teaching I noted this in my diary:

'June 1979. I am tired of meetings where we talk about ideas of children. It's so technical. Where is the respect for individuals? Today we talked about these ideas and no child's name was mentioned. It seems so beside the point.'

I believe that this way of thinking sees as special, a way of accounting for education through meanings accrued by individuals. There is, it seems to me, a glimmer of a later perception that there is something special in the nature of education which cannot simply be derived by ideas about it from other areas of knowledge. This is not to say that I could have articulated such a belief, and certainly I could not have contextualised it at the time. I do not, however, want to appear as more knowledgeable and understanding of the processes at the time than I was, or simply to reject all understandings which emerged through the disciplines approach, or to give the impression of outstanding insights. I think I had some intuitions and it has been some of those which I have held onto in my seventeen years in education and begun to understand more in my three years of research. Indeed the process of my own research has largely been one of becoming more conscious about my predispositions as well as new insights and evolving my own theory of what my educational knowledge signifies.

By 1982 Hirst was ready to start to move away from some of his far-reaching conclusions of the seventies. One of the dangers of research

applied to education as opposed to arising from within it, was the technologising of the process of education itself. There had been within Peters' and Hirst's work some acknowledgement of the importance of relating thought to practice. However, the emphasis on applying external criteria to practice was beginning to be seen as problematic. Codes and principles derived from elsewhere and therefore what counted as validity both in practice and theory, were leading to something which did not relate directly to the process of education and educational research.

It was in 1983 that a most significant acknowledgement was made by Hirst in which he stated that he was mistaken in thinking that educational knowledge and valid research into education could only be constituted through the disciplines of the sociology, philosophy, psychology and history of education. In his acknowledgement of his own previous and now perceived error he said this:

'the question then is no longer whether particular judgements or actions were the best that could be taken by this practitioner in the circumstances in which the situation arose, but whether the understanding, principles, and capacities that he could bring were themselves justifiable. It is with the critique of 'operational educational theory' in this sense that educational theory in its wider sense is concerned....Many of these concepts will be those of everyday life, developed to capture the complex situations and activities as existential wholes, while taking for granted a common recognition of their detailed characters and their context.' (p.17/18)

He goes on to say:

'Rationally defensible practical principles...must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate.'

(p.18)

The significance of this admission cannot be overstated. The assumption had been that theory preceded practice. Now comes the beginning of an idea which would validate an educational research predicated more upon education as a form of knowledge in itself, created by educationists about the processes of education with which they were themselves involved. My research is focused on revealing the nature of such 'rationally defensible practical principles' and in establishing the practical tests for judging the validity of the principles. But this is not my language. Let me step outside this linguistic style for a moment and say what I mean in my own language. I have attempted to engage in research and writing about research which is a true reflection of endeavours to realise in my practice, those values which I have come to realise represent the best that I can offer in education. In the section about my work with Sarah which follows, I would say that I have presented my best work to date in terms of the valid codes of conduct by which I wish to be judged in education. My 'rationally defensible practical principles' are all those which constituted the work that was necessary for me to be able to write this present work.

The late Seventies and much of the Eighties could be said to be characterised by the lack of consensus about nature of educational theory. Lincoln (1993) expresses the consequent disarray thus:

'Even when individuals understand that the arguments are much

larger than simply methods, even small groups cannot agree on what an integrated metaphysic might be for guiding research efforts. Nor is there likely to be a consensus in the social sciences for decades to come...The absence of a canon for educational research is projected to last until well into the next millennium.' (p.4/5)

Fewer articles and books were being written from the point of view that educational research and theory were the premises of the knowledge derived from the methodologies and epistemologies of empirical or applied sciences, or indeed now the disciplines approaches. In other words, apart from research on education, other viewpoints were coming to the fore. This is neatly exemplified by the work of Delamont and Hamilton (1976), whose book on systematic observation marks a turning point in the development of more classroom-based teacher knowledge. It was now being perceived as necessary for educational researchers to find other ways of coming to know and to validate such knowledge. Empirical and applied-sciences with their value-free stance appeared to negate the moral and ethical relativism implicit in many educational processes, and in the disciplines approach values were related to their epistemological basis. The search for a way forward during this troubled period manifested itself in discussions about how to relate theory to practice. This time was characterised by researchers attempting to give a new form to educational knowledge, straddling the seeming disparities within a notion of practice versus theory with an explanation of the value-laden nature of any educational activity. Carr (1980) (and Dunlop three years earlier) had also written about their concern at the hiatus between theory and practice and their belief in its consequent distorting nature.

In 1989, John Elliot, Professor of Education at the Centre for Applied Research in Education at the University of East Anglia gave the presidential address at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference entitled, 'Educational Research in Crisis: Performance Indicators and the Decline in Excellence'. In it he emphasises that:

'the present government is forcing it (Higher Education) to accept a model of resource management which is endangering what I shall call conversational research communities. In my view such communities, and not individuals working in isolation from them, are the repositories of excellence in research.' (p.9)

This comment is a far cry from a view of valid educational research being based upon edicts from other spheres of knowledge, and is clear about the place of communities within the generation and testing of educational validity both of research and practice. Things have come so far that Elliott can now state:

'the primary aim of educational research; namely, to promote worthwhile change by influencing the practical judgements of teachers and policy-makers...what makes research educational is the positive vision of education which conditions the inquiry. The research process is not dissociated from a concern to change things for the better. The primary outcome of educational research is not propositional knowledge but practical wisdom.' (p.11)

This exemplifies how the shift in epistemological basis is defining the validity of the outcomes of educational research. There is a desired

meshing between theory and practice. Elliott attributes his understanding of the validity of educational research being defined thus from Maxwell (1984) who stated:

'the central and basic intellectual task of rational inquiry [helps us] to imbue our personal and social lives with vividly imagined and criticised possible actions so that we may discover, and perform, where possible, those actions which enable us to realize what is of value in life.' (Introduction)

There is in this assumption of Maxwell's tenet that if one is to find a valid form of educational enquiry, the emphasis needs to be placed on the acquisition of wisdom and not the lower order perspective of knowledge. I am reminded of T.S. Eliot's (1937) lines:

Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

It is a holistic approach which both educator and poet wish to see applied to the way in which we approach our lives. More specifically, John Elliott is writing about the processes of research and educational practice. His address is asking researchers to focus on what is of value in life. It extends Simon's call for researchers to focus on education itself rather than on using externally derived principles of validity.

The Development of Action Research

I now want to move into the paradigm of action research in order that I might help you to see why I have chosen a particular strand of action research as appropriate both for the methodology and philosophy of my enquiry. I will as well outline some of the differences between the ways in which action research as a genre has developed and diversified, for where there are divisions, a researcher must choose.

Pioneered by Kurt Lewin in the forties, action research has gained increasing credence as a form of educational research. Over the past few years this has been consolidated through an emphasis upon the possibilities of actualising emancipatory and democratic principles through what Elliott (1990a) terms 'collaborative inquiry'. He alludes to its value in reference to the problems of validating case studies written from a personal perspective. A rigorous attention to notions of triangulation, through trial and error and through the sharing of outcomes and dissemination of ideas, the action research movement has claimed adherents throughout the educational world. Emancipatory or collaborative action research assumes that education cannot be value-free, and that every act committed in the name of education has a basis in the practitioner's values. In addition there is a dialectical link between practitioner and context. Emancipatory or collaborative action research also assumes an intersubjective approach to objectivity and validates the emancipatory nature of its claims to knowledge by a systematic analysis of how principles of democracy and social justice are being realised in educational settings (Carr and Kemmis, 1983). In such an ethos, valid research centres on issues pertaining to these areas and the ways in which they have been followed through, how consistent, logical, rationalisable,

defensible and illuminating they are. Issues of generalisability are not judged in the same way in emancipatory action research which would be necessary within, for example, the empirical approach to educational research. Very often action research enquiries exist in individual settings, the practitioner being responsible for taking an issue of principle and researching into ways of how it can be practically improved.

The principal differences in the various forms of Action Research

I will now look briefly at the differing types of action research and show the reader where my own research is grounded. Put simply, there are two broadly different processes which cohere under the title of action research. The first one, technical action research, emphasises the method of modifying processes in the light of investigated concerns. It adheres to the method of systematic and cyclical enquiry without a grounding in a particular set of values. Emancipatory action research requires this method to adhere closely within every stage of the enquiry to an orientation towards realising democratic and emancipatory values in action. In other words, to merit the name emancipatory, such an enquiry must show that its motivation and processes are themselves rooted in the emancipation of all the recipients of the research and by implication the context in which the research is carried out. This will include, then, not simply the researcher, but also any co-researchers, pupils, students, etc. and the classrooms under investigation. Collaborative or participatory action research are focused heavily on the processes of working together on issues which are negotiated by all concerned within the processes. Outcomes are in all forms of action research made public because not only does this increase rigour and by extension the validity of one's claims to knowledge, but also emphasises a belief that knowledge sets the reader and

the creator(s) free, and that by sharing our knowledge we devolve the power implicit in the creation of knowledge. By working collaboratively as well in such a venture, we share the responsibility and power of that knowledge-creation. One of the spin-offs of a collaborative form of action enquiry appears to be the extent to which processes are democratised, as Henry (1989) affirms.

A prime motive of working together in an educational action research context is the potential to negotiate meanings that may lead to educational improvements. As early as 1956, Shumsky (cited in (ed.) Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988) wrote about the benefits of co-operation in action research, saying this:

'an action research movement is potentially a grass-roots approach to the solution of community problems.' (p. 81)

He goes further, though, and expresses what appears to be ontological aspects to such research:

'Co-operation on an action research project may fulfil many needs in the life of modern man...it generates a feeling of relatedness...he finds that the worst of all pains is aloneness and isolation.' (p.82)

And it is in the area of my own ontology in which I find a great motivating factor for the form of educational action research I have chosen to work in. The next section highlights the reasons for my choice.

Which Action Research?

It is true to say that the validity of individual orientation is not a universally held principle within the action research communities, represented in this country by John Elliott at the University of East Anglia, Wilf Carr at the University of Sheffield, Jean Rudduck now at Homerton College, Pam Lomax at Kingston University, and Jack Whitehead at the University of Bath together with Jean McNiff (1988, 1992), who has been a key person in the dissemination of Whitehead's ideas. In reference to the above point, Elliott (1991) writes of the danger as he perceives it, of individual action enquiries as he believes they can lead to a mere 'technical rationality'. (In other words, technical action research in which the researcher puts into operation the methodological principles without grounding the process in a set of preconceived and/or developing values.) This view of a method taking the place of what is perceived as a more dynamic and synergetic process is not far from Schön's (1983) view of a technical rationality. Elliott is of the opinion that valid educational knowledge is acquired through collaboration. He believes that emancipatory or collaborative action research is likely to yield results which are of a more qualitatively educational kind as he and others (like Whitehead) see a necessary correlation between good educational processes and collaboration. Whitehead (1985) places emphasis on the individual's right to determine the nature and course of her/his enquiry, given the necessary parameters of collaboration and the growth towards consensus at the points of change, evaluation and accountability. Greater individual autonomy and responsibility both for action and claims to knowledge are exemplified by his work. I will write about this at length shortly, as his approach is the one I have adopted in my own praxis.

Carr and Kemmis (1983) have been leading lights in the move towards developing an emancipatory philosophy for the methodology of action research along lines of critical theorists such as Habermas (1974). They have been criticised thus by Waters-Adams (1992):

'by aligning action research with Habermas' critical social science, Carr and Kemmis appear to have been blinded by the rhetoric of enlightenment, collaboration and political action to the extent that they lose sight of this fundamental issue: to engage in action research is a personal decision, by people engaged in the pursuit of 'personal knowledge' (p. 58)

Collaborative/Participatory or Individual Action Research?

I turn now to the importance of McTaggart's and Kemmis' collaborative work at Deakin University, Australia, as a stepping stone to my own, somewhat contrary concern, about the role of individual practice as a determinant for valid educational knowledge. Within their now expanded *Action Research Reader*, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) provide an extensive overview of some of the significant work being done around the world in the name of emancipatory action research. It is in itself a statement of how far, and in what ways action research has been gathering momentum and acceptability throughout a growing number of academic and teacher-researcher centres. (The latter category has been largely created through this form of approach to educational knowledge and can be traced back in part to the work of Stenhouse (1975) who advocated teachers becoming researchers into their own practice.)

Whitehead (1989b) says that educational theory itself can be created

through the descriptions and explanations of practitioners as they attempt to find an answer to questions of the kind, 'how can I improve my practice?' This I is not simply a catalyst in the process of innovation and improvement but a causal agent in dialectical relationship to the context in which the improvement is enacted. Furthermore, the centrality of the I embraces 'a living contradiction' (Ilyenkov, 1977), and it is this living contradiction which determines the dialectical nature of any knowledge accruing from the processes of action enquiries. It is in the interaction between the dialectical relationship one experiences with the self, the context, one's orientation to it and the influence of others, which determine then, the unique nature of each researcher's contribution and makes inescapable, the consequence that it is through personally orientated action enquiries that one comes to know. It is with this view that I find much with which to identify, and where I feel that my own epistemological basis finds voice. I wish my own work to be grounded in the empowering values (as I perceive them) of this form of action research and would therefore perceive myself as accountable not only to academics in terms of the rigour, validity and usefulness of my work, but also to my students, colleagues and other interested parties.

For example, when I had finished the following section about my work with Sarah, the English PGCE student with whom I did some detailed work this year, I gave it to her and asked for her opinion. More than that, I wanted to offer her the necessary opportunity to make comments on it which she trusted I would take into consideration. I wanted to take their comments seriously in my own reflections and writing-up. After all, I had written about her. It would not satisfy me unless it was able to convince her that what I had written was an authentic narrative in which she could

recognise her own processes. This is what she wrote on 22.7.93. in reply:

'Moira, I think this is brilliant. You've encapsulated for me some/most of the learning I experienced at the time - put it into words that I could understand. It was an educational experience to read and I would like a copy! Much of what you say about your educational values I can identify with. (Funny that!)

Some observations! Do you think you should re-work the 'Hello sun!' bit? Knowing you and your rigorous approach, I know there's nothing wishy-washy, or pretentious about what you say - but it is possible to mock, misinterpret or be put off...

(In giving a draft of the next section to a colleague, Kevin Eames, he had commented on the possible danger of appearing too evangelical and full of sunshine! I had talked about that to Sarah before she read the same section. As a result of their comments I included something of what they both said.)

I like the way you've done the end (last section in which I interspersed the drafting conversation) but have you put enough of yourself in? It was an intensely educational process for me and I couldn't have done it without you. Have you allowed enough of your voice?

Obviously there were things you said which impacted in ways you wouldn't know or expect. They can't really be included without my collaboration.'

I would want to be judged by, amongst other things, the standards of judgement which apply to collaborative or participatory action research work which were originally outlined by Carr and Kemmis (1983) and later employed by Kemmis (1990) (and Smyth (1991)) as the basis for his article calling for an improvement in education which he sees as pivotal to an improvement in the quality of life of a society:

'If we employ the five requirements in making a critique of conventional approaches to educational research and evaluation, we discover that most can generate only limited, partial and (frequently) misleading advice about the nature and worth of particular educational activities.' (p.86)

- *'The rejection of Positivist Approaches as Partial and Misleading'* (p.87)
- *'The Need to Employ the Interpretive Categories of Participants'*.(p.88)
- *'Identifying Ideological Distortions on Interpretation.'* (p.89)
- *Identifying Aspects of the Social Order which Frustrate the Pursuit of Rational Goals.'* (p.90)
- *The Relationship to Practice.'* (p.91)

Henry (1989), building on Carr and Kemmis' ideas, reminds us of a danger he perceives although:

'the democratisation of research...is the best argument I know for participatory research. (p.15)

This danger exists because:

'the state [might] recognise[s] the connection between knowledge and

control, why should it diminish its hold on people by enabling them access to knowledge which makes it harder to keep ordinary people in their place?’ (p.15)

Individual Action Research Enquiries

Although as I said above I would want to be judged by the criteria used to validate collaborative enquiries, at this point I want to come back in detail to Whitehead’s contribution to educational research. I would like you to understand why it is that his particular form of educational research is the one which I can see as having helped me to speak with my own voice and to draw conclusions which for me resonate on many different levels of my ability to perceive them. In his twenty or so years at Bath University, Whitehead has published work about his three original ideas. The first is a description of an action reflection cycle which becomes the basis for individual action in the systematic pursuit of the improvement of educational practice. The second concerns placing within this action reflection cycle the individual’s ‘I’ as a living contradiction: an agent of change, unique to each enquiry. The third idea is the development of the first two ideas into the creation of living educational theories. I will discuss each idea in some detail, as my own educational development can be understood in terms of my developing understanding of the significance of each of these ideas. I will take them in a different order, and with different emphases for reasons which will become clear.

a) The centrality of the ‘I’.

What first drew me to action research at the university was nothing to do with Theory. I could not see a way that educational theory related to any of

my previous eleven years' practice. I studied for my M.Ed. in 1988/89 and had the good fortune to meet David McConnell who facilitated the Educational Development and Technology module. He was a brilliant and inspiring teacher. For the first time in my educational life, someone asked me about my reasons for being in education and challenged me to see the links between my values and my practice. Through such encouragement I rediscovered A.S. Neill (1968) and read Carl Rogers (1984) and wrote in my diary:

'October 1988. I feel as if I have come home. The way I want to teach in the classroom has a philosophy and a history. Rogers believes that people can be good and that they can become responsible for their own learning. I knew that in my heart. To read it in a book seems nothing short of a miracle. They call it 'student-centred learning'. I think that's always what I've tried to do. Wow!'

I attended the action research module as an observer. Colleagues told me how interesting it was. I was intrigued by the concentration on the 'T' and attracted by its democratic ethos as Whitehead practised it, but much of the significance of it passed me by. The 'T' as a living contradiction remained for some time someone else's idea! I clearly saw as correlational, student-centred learning and Whitehead's insistence on the centrality of the 'T' in discussion with him as my supervisor. When I facilitated in Zac's enquiry (1990-1991) my insistence on the centrality of the 'T' seemed to supercede every other consideration. I think it is also pertinent that there is scant evidence in Zac's final report that any of the children in his care improved in terms of their curricular or personal learning. I had no formal standards of judgement which demanded that they consider the question I asked

Sarah and her group this year:

'In an account of your professional development what evidence do you have that any pupil has learnt something of value and has taken some responsibility for that learning?'

His report concentrates almost entirely on his own personal and professional development, almost as if he saw them as entirely separable from his pupils' learning. In concentrating on the 'I' without its component of the living contradiction and the dialectical relationship with a systematic enquiry to improve the quality of learning, the kind of facilitation I was able to offer the students in that year, was limited.

Who is this particular 'I'?

I am not at this point going to go into exhaustive biographical detail: I do not consider it necessary. Neither do I consist only of that which I could write in a section of a Ph.D. thesis. I, like any other individual, exceed formulated parameters. Apart from what I have already written in this thesis about my preconceptions and predispositions, for example in the section about educational narratives and fiction, there are three aspects of my biography which I believe are relevant for you to understand. These three events in my life are formative and thus impinge deeply on the values which I can live out in my practice with my students; they are instrumental (to what degree I do not comprehend) in enabling me to define what it is I do care about in this life. I perceive my self and my values as indistinguishable at the point at which meanings can be evolved into my actions. These events are, however, without doubt, part-answers to why I persist in living out my values in the ways that I do, and are

partially explanatory of the reasons why I perceive truth, beauty and goodness as in deeply complex ways related to care and healthy relationships with others.

The first of these events relates to my brother, Alastair, who is nearly eleven years younger than I. He could not talk until he was nearly six years old. Words like 'autistic' were bandied about, but no one seemed really to know what was the matter. He appeared to inhabit a world with a population of one. Very often I would come home from school and find him sitting in his room rocking back and forth in a rhythm which bore little relation to the classical music which he played from morning to night. From the age of eighteen months he worked the record player independently and would have tantrums of frightening proportions if anyone tried to dissuade him from listening all day to Bach, Vivaldi and Richard Strauss. At the ages of eleven and twelve, I perceived him as an uneasy burden, in other words as existent only within my understanding. I didn't want to spend more time with him than I had to: I wanted to go out and be with my friends. Neither was I ever expected to shoulder such a responsibility. However gradually I took to spending time in his room and he would be rocking - as always - and sometimes there would be tears on his cheeks. No sounds, just tears. These tears undid me every time. Sometimes I would still go out but my feet and heart would drag and within minutes I would return to his room, pick out one of the many story-books, and read to him. I had no idea whether he heard me, or whether he listened. I often asked him questions and then answered them myself. It became almost routine this questioning. I would sit with him on the ground mostly, and he would rock and I would read. But one day, when he was nearly six, I was reading him a fairy story, and asked him

who was married to the king. Clear as a bell he answered, 'queen!' I will never forget the elation of that moment. It seemed to me then (and still does) to be the most educative moment of my life, when communication was achieved that had more significance than any I have achieved since. There was something archetypal about it for my life: to experience that moment was to know that truth has some relationship to love. I really did know from that moment that I wanted to be an educator. That 'event' defined for me the parameters of what constituted 'educational'. Alastair had begun the pathway to communicating with others. He was nearly six. I was sixteen years old.

I am reminded of, and am indebted to, Chris Clark (1992) whose article revealed how his severely epileptic son was his greatest teacher, in that the child developed no animosity towards the world and was able to live in goodness and to be, for his father, an example of leading 'a life in truth'. It was after reading this article that I recognised the debt I owe Alastair in my life, and many aspects of my adult life fell into place. Directly after meeting Chris¹ and reading his article, I was able to understand about what that moment (and what had led up to it) meant to me. What I didn't find in his article were the ways in which he had taken his undoubtedly heartfelt experience and turned it into action which he was representing in an educational way for his readers. I was inspired by his article, but I felt he could have taught me so much more if he had chosen to present his ideas in a different, less propositional way.

The second of these 'events' was a brutal rape I experienced sixteen years ago at the age of twenty three. It traumatised me beyond anything I can put

¹ Chris Clark visited the School of Education on his way to give his paper at an education conference in Tel Aviv in 1992.

into words. And for fourteen years I told no one. I denied my own voice for all that time. Part of the healing process was the writing of a paper (1992d) which I presented to an M.Ed. Action Research group which I was helping to run with Jack Whitehead. I presented it as an example of my aspiration towards an ontological authenticity (Ghaye, 1992), something which had been concerning me for all the time I had been engaged in my research. One of the group had challenged me to state where my values had come from. The resultant trauma inspired some true creativity in which for the first time I voiced something of my inner self. The violation had become something through which I could understand the value of trust, cooperation, gentleness and love and perceive their meaning in leading a life which could fulfil me. The process of owning its importance in my life has been one of the most educative experiences I have ever 'endured'.

The third 'event' was not an event at all, but a consequence of the third. Because of the rape I contracted a disease which rendered me infertile. I was too ashamed to have the condition treated and by the time I sought help (about eight very painful months later) it was too late. When I was an adolescent and particularly after my experiences with Alastair, I had two aims: to become a teacher and a mother. I wanted seven children! Not being able to have children is a source of continuing sadness to me, but enables me to gain a perspective on the value of creating relationships which help others to realise themselves. I believe that it is through this sadness that I can know the joy of such creative endeavours.

I think the above might give you some idea why it is I care so much about people being enabled to speak with their own voices. I believe that people

have a right to communicate their realities as long as those communications do not impinge on the right of others to do the same. Alastair's and my voice were silent for too long. It might explain why I fight hard to realise those processes in my educative relationships in which power is not used for its own sake and for self-aggrandisement, but only in the pursuit of understanding. It might also explain why I can be easily reduced to tears of joy when a student speaks for the first time in what she recognises as her own voice. Barbara (1993) a PGCE French student, wrote this at the end of her final report:

'I had had experiences and insights which have changed me significantly and I had expected now that it was over, to feel tired but elated and pleased with all that I gained. Instead, well, I could only describe the experience as being rather like 'baby-blues', when, after the birth, you find that you are in a sort of emotional 'no man's land', a period of transition from one state to another. I had come to understand why I felt the report was so inadequate: until I had understood the nature of the phase I had entered in writing the report, i.e. that it is a transitional phase rather than a dead end, I could not 'end' it. This area of learning will lead me further yet; it has not finished because I do not want it to be finished. This was part of the learning that the action research study had to bring me to understand...'

(p.16)

Perhaps you see as well why I care about negotiation and respect for individuals, and why I care passionately about the rights of individuals to come to their own conclusions, indeed why I might have been sometimes too forceful about that to the detriment of the education which I

promoted. I will not attribute a purely causal relationship between the three 'events' and my educational life, but I know that the threads weaving my values and actions into an intricate tapestry are infused with their moral colours. I believe that these 'moral colours' have taught me that 'educational truth' for me emerges through the dialectic between individual (and collaborative) responsibility and the ethics of the educative relationships I experience with my students.

b) as a Living Contradiction

When I eventually began my M.Phil. research in October 1990, I had no doubt that I wanted to pursue an action research enquiry. I was, however, skeptical about a living contradiction being first a natural human attribute and second, when conscious, a spur to learning. I took a great deal on trust and ignorance. However, with an English Elective group (1990-1991) at the University, I introduced the idea of action research to them early in the course, and I wrote about the session in my Action Research Guide:

'I believed they would be able to use the methodology to understand more fully the way forward in their early days as practitioners. I decided, with their permission, to video the session. The results were rather disturbing. All right, the results were shocking! Who was this person sitting at the front, all serious and evangelical, talking about Action Research with very little humour? And hadn't I always said that humour was really important in the classroom? That it brought something to life and enabled people to engage in 'the lesson' more easily, in a way that nothing else could? And if was the case, I had just done for Action Research on one level, what Attila the Hun did for social etiquette! And hadn't I usually used humour to enhance the atmosphere in a

classroom? I don't know. I was quite pleased at the content of what I was doing, but seeing how I was actually engaging with the students has been for us all a sobering experience.

The result of this part of my research (which would not have been possible without using the video) is to make me question the way I approach students and is forcing me to re-assess my own efficacy as a facilitator... However I have a responsibility to try to improve my practice, as do all professionals whose actions have strong repercussions for the people who rely on us. This experience marks a stage in my own educational development and one that has been entirely the result of collecting and analysing data as an integral part of my research.' (p.28)

In fact this educational development I allude to above neatly illustrates the dialectical nature of such action enquiries. Such learning is not entirely the result of collecting and analysing data, but also its combination with my emerging understanding of my own responsibility for so doing in the name of education. It is my choice, derived from my own 'I'.

In 1991/92 in my facilitation of Justine's enquiry there was a crisis point. She arrived at one validation meeting and angrily threw down some sheets she had been writing. She was experiencing a frustrating impasse in her enquiry. I allude to this incident in the report (Laidlaw, 1992e) I wrote about my mixed response:

'There is a living contradiction here. I have stated many times my belief in the valuable autonomy of the individual. I have talked to my students about it. I have often managed to embody it in my practice.

Even more significantly, I said to Justine in our very first conversation, that I thought it unethical for educational research to be purely research on rather than research with. And this is because education is about individuals as much as it is about ideas.’ (p.22)

I was very concerned that after all the work I had done with Justine, she might opt out of the process. Indeed in my journal (which I reproduced in the same report) I wrote very directly:

‘5.5.92. Oh shit! What the hell am I going to do about Justine?’

It seems that in the above quotation but one, I have understood the centrality of my ‘I’ as a living contradiction but not its necessary dialectical relationship to a systematic enquiry. Although Justine’s report has some evidence of pupil learning, it is not expansive, and at the time I did not recognise the epistemological significance of this weakness. Although I read about ‘pupil learning’, wrote on it (as above), talked about it with the students, and discussed it with my supervisor, I had not developed an understanding which could enable a change from an intellectual to a practical knowledge. For me such a process must be mediated through my emotions. This failure of understanding, then, is not unusual in terms of the way I learn. I see myself as a slow learner in the sense that until I have experienced something through my emotions and feelings, I do not manage to communicate it to others in my practice. I believe in fact, that I do not really comprehend it myself. For example, I failed my eleven-plus, achieved mediocre ‘O’ and ‘A’ Level results, a reasonably good first degree and eventually a Masters degree. It is only now, however, that through my research for the Ph.D., when I am instigating and coming to terms with

my own ways of knowing, that I am at last beginning to communicate to others an understanding that can be translated into practice. I think the proof of that claim rests in the following section on my work with Sarah. Noddings (1984) characterises this way of knowing as:

'When we understand we feel that this object-other has responded to us.'
(p.169)

Similarly, Belenky et al (1986) interpret it thus:

'Connected knowing arises out of the experience of relationships; it requires intimacy and equality between self and object, not distance and impersonality; its goal is understanding, not proof.' (p.183)

My understanding, then, is largely created through relationships with others in which events translate themselves from ideas into meaning and eventually into significance. I had yet to learn the significance of systematic enquiry in combination with my own living 'I'. I had an article (Laidlaw, 1992a) published in which I argued for emotionality as a legitimate form of knowing and that action research is not a method or philosophy which silences women's voices. In the article, however, I had still not quite seen the potential for my own 'I' as a living contradiction as a limitless possibility for expression. I knew it abstractly, but had yet to experience the reality of it as I am doing within this writing (as evidenced within the part of this section which deals with my own 'I' for example). As a result the article is entirely propositional in character and tone and deals with reality as if construed externally and without collaboration. It is an intellectual exercise alone.

I will give you two linked example of where I think my deeper understanding of the educative nature of the processes in which I have been involved this year seems to have been successfully communicated to two students, Nigel and Emma. Nigel was a Physics PGCE student (1992/93) with whom I worked closely. Before Easter I prepared a paper (1993a) which I presented as Easter-reading to the PGCE Action Research Group about the work which Nigel and I had conducted together. I wrote the whole paper (about 25,000 words) in the Action Reflection Cycle form, and almost entirely through conversations tried to communicate to the other students the power of educative conversations as a form in which learning takes place. I included these words from Nigel's journal as one of the focally important points of the whole learning process:

'29.3.93. Talking to Moira tonight, I contested something she had written in her words. She stated that I had not made a connection between what I was asking the pupils to do and what I was doing myself. The discussion developed and I ended up taking her point. I have not been making the assumption that the proposed improvement in the standard of work is due to my efforts...The reason I think this is strange is that last week...I was considering the problem of 'proving' that any improvement was due to my actions...This means that the parallel between me and my pupils runs deeper than either Moira...or I had first thought...I just keep peeling off layers of the significance of my actions...'

Emma (1993), an English student, put it this way in her final report:

'As so often before I have drawn comparison with my own experience as a pupil of Moira's for this enquiry. I think I can again here. Moira did not set up a series of times and dates for each of us to report on what was happening in our enquiries on an individual level. The system has been that when we have needed help/guidance we could approach Moira. Bingo! It is only through the pupil identifying the need that the teacher, i.e. Moira, steps in and reacts to this need. The teacher is hearing the pupil and shaping her role dependent on the pupil. I feel that this is what I am moving towards with my action research'. (p.13)

Why I am so gratified with those responses from the students is that they suggest that the way in which I conducted the educative relationships with them enabled them to find out some educational truths for themselves which had value for them and for their pupils. It was not my understanding that they were reproducing, but their own that they were consolidating through writing about it. My understanding seems this year to have reached the point in which I comprehend more of the effect on others of my facilitation. It is one of my cherished values that learners have the opportunity to frame some of their own learning. If through the way I have acted this year with the students they are beginning to understand in their own ways something of the educational significance of learner-directed learning for themselves and their own pupils, then I feel there is reason for me to be optimistic that I have acted consistently within my own value-parameters. It is, I believe, in the dialectical nature of the form and content of my research that such learning has been enabled to occur. Within the systematic nature of an action enquiry, I believe I can locate more fully the way in which I have been able to live out my emerging standards of judgement which are implied by the above

examples.

Action Reflection Cycle as a Systematic Enquiry

I think my failure to understand the significance of linking the 'I' and the 'Living Contradiction' resulted in some missed opportunities for learning particularly during the years 1990-1992. I can characterise the significance of the linking through one example from my work this year in which for the first time I understood the term 'standards of judgement' in relation to a systematic enquiry. As I wrote before about my lack of authentic engagement with the realities of others, I think that I show in this response to their work. As a result of reading my students' final reports I set about writing a response which I wanted to fulfil two purposes. The first was on a collective level - I was trying to say what I thought they had in common, what they had collectively contributed to educational knowledge and theory. Secondly I wrote something about their individual contributions. I reproduce here the first section:

What combines your individual enquiries?

A Personal View.

*Moirá Laidlaw, 27.5.93. Postgraduate Action Research Group,
School of Education, Bath University.*

These thirteen studies are an impressive array of the professional practice of individual teachers who are struggling to come to terms with the manifold demands of the day-to-day job of teaching real children in real situations. The commitment that you have shown in order to produce this work is outstanding and I want to take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate your dedication and creativity. It has made my time

here over the last few months some of the most educationally rewarding that I have ever spent since I first came into teaching in 1977. Thank you so much for that.

Values: I suppose what I personally and professionally find most moving about this as a collection is how it testifies to so many values which I suppose I came in the job to try and live out. As with you, I didn't know what my educational values were specifically, and for years, I regret to say, I didn't find the space in my days to articulate those values in practice as well as I might. I learnt, as you all seem to assert in your studies, the value of seeking my values, however, and one of those was that as an educator was to facilitate myself and others to speak with their own voices. I really feel that this collection is a living testament to that value and find it difficult to express in words how much that means to me. I think these studies reveal a commitment to improve the quality of learning with your pupils, be that curricular or personal learning. All your assignments show some real concern to provide evidence of pupil learning, and you have shown, I think, how your attempts to think of ways of providing that evidence has become itself a focus of self-development and professional learning for you.

Democracy: I think another aspect which unifies these studies is the way in which your concern to learn from your pupils what it is they need to enable them to learn better, has democratised the learning process. Your assignments suggest that there is an intimate link between learning from your pupils and democracy in action. Many of you have been able to show how and in what way you have adapted your teaching strategies in order to accommodate the individual learning needs of your pupils in a

bid to improve the quality of their learning (whilst at the same time, improving your own).

***Social Justice:** All of your enquiries focused on an aspect of a situation which you felt for one reason or other, was not being lived out in the most productive way. Some of this reason can be put down to your own living contradiction, in that you are not living out one or some of your espoused values. Each of your studies is a unique response to this unease: something is not just, and your role is to understand that injustice and by understanding it and acting on that understanding, improve the situation for the benefit of others. It seems to me to highlight the altruistic dimensions to all emancipatory action enquiries.*

***Systematic Reflection:** I believe as well that all of your studies show the value of systematic reflection upon your practice for your future career and for the pupils in all your classes. Most of you alluded to the idea that this way of working has raised your consciousness of what you are doing with all your pupils and not just the 'target' class for your research. This of course goes some way to justifying the time that you chose to devote to one class and in many of your cases, one pupil.*

***Truth, Authenticity, Honesty, Integrity:** All your studies show a commitment to live out the above as courageously as you can. All of you have had to discover, it seems to me, what constitutes for you all those aspects of our experience in ways which can enhance your own professional insight and actions with the children. You have had to deal with issues like the ethics of your research, whilst at the same time remaining true to your own values. The ways in which you have*

negotiated those tricky aspects have constituted explicit chapters in your professional development.

***Standards of Judgement:** Something I have gone on about this year, but it seems that all of you now understand more about who you are as a professional and the kinds of decisions you will be making and why, and the extent to which you are justified in making such decisions. You have all asked yourselves questions of the kind, 'what are the standards of judgement which test the validity of this account?' and have done it in ways which are creative and communicable.*

***A Teacher's Role:** Many of you have also raised the idea that it is in a consideration of my role in your learning that has enabled you to focus on your role in the learning of your students and pupils. This again, clearly, is a matter for celebration for me as an educator, if indeed I am trying to practice what I preach, and not to allow the living contradiction which I believe we all are in our own ways, to dominate my practice. It has seemed to become apparent to many of us as we have been through these enquiries, that a valuable way to approach teaching is as a learner oneself, about one's pupils/students, values, context, curriculum, learning needs of others and oneself.*

***Collaboration:** As an integral part of your enquiries you were required to work collaboratively with others in coming to conclusions about the educational validity of your work. The professional ways in which you came to conclusions about how to conduct that aspect of your enquiry became more than simply methodological, and were feeding into the philosophy and knowledge which characterised and partly validated your*

research.

Case Studies from Previous Researchers: All of you have made some reference to the case studies written by previous students. I think your use shows the potential for your own studies for future actions researchers, and emphasises an aspect of the educational validity of the work you have done.

Educational Knowledge and Theory: All of you have made certain claims to knowledge. You have had an idea and tested it in the classroom. You have modified it in the light of your new understanding and then evaluated the outcome with the insights of others. You have held yourself to public accountability and through descriptions and explanations of your professional lives your work has stood up to these tests of validity. Then surely now, those words you read in the booklet, 'Action Research and the Special Study' about the contribution you are making to educational knowledge and theory should strike some chord! Your knowledge is now tested, and evaluated. You know where you stand on certain issues and you have communicated that in a public forum. Your studies will be read by others and your insights and understanding integrated into their understanding and insights. Is that not how knowledge and theory are created and generated? You have made a scholarly as well as practical contribution to your subject, education...

So, as you can see, each of you has contributed something unique and yet more generalisably valuable and comprehensible. I will finish with something which Joanne leaves her reader with, something which I find inspiring in its humility and hope:

'I do not know what I may appear to the world but to myself I seem to have been only a boy playing on the sea-shore and diverting myself now and then, finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me.' (Isaac Newton)

Jack Whitehead and I had talked extensively since 1990 about educational standards of judgement as integral to the kinds of processes in which we as educators could engage. I did not relate to it as it sounded mechanistic and anti-individualistic. This year at last, I began, through my relationships with the students, to perceive the significance to educational actions of having internalised standards of judgement as validating principles. No longer was 'standards of judgement' a concept for me, it had become a living reality in my educative relationships with my students. Together we had worked systematically, using the centrality of the 'T' as a living contradiction, and Whitehead's action reflection cycle (1989b) to produce unique contributions to educational knowledge. These standards of judgement constitute some of my 'rationally defensible practical principles' which I have come to understand over the period of my research. Other concepts which have been enabled to come alive for me through this way of working include democracy, and social justice. They do not live for me alone as ideas in my head, but in working closely and carefully with others in a self-reflective and systematically organised collaborative way, such concepts have taken on their own life and have become for me the answer to the question which my supervisor has posed me about the justification for my research: **In the name of what?**

I hope it is becoming clear to you now that the two categories, the centrality of the I as a living contradiction and its insertion into a systematic form of reflection/action cycle should not be seen as separate, but existing in a synergetic dialectical relationship. It is only this year, however, that I have really begun to reap the benefits, not of seeing it this way, but of living it this way. I am claiming that my deep comprehension through experience and careful research, has enabled me to, for example, create with my students standards of judgement which live and develop just as their insights do. I will return to this later as I believe that this living process, a truly living art form, has an aesthetic morphology by which I can judge the educative relationships in which I have been involved and which constitute my claim to an original contribution to educational knowledge and my own Living Educational Theory.

Just for a moment I would like to return to the story which I included at the beginning of the section about narrative writing. It is only as I write this that I am realising something quite profound. The story contains, in symbolic form, a commitment to a journey of self-exploration (the 'I'). There is within it someone who wants to communicate apparently with others and yet succeeds only in communicating finally with herself ('a living contradiction'):

'Somewhere lived people like her. Somewhere she would not be unlike.'

and:

'People listened to her with respect, or if they didn't, she hardly

noticed.'

In addition this story recognises the cyclical nature of experience and knowledge ('the action reflection cycle') and the person's place within that. What the young woman doesn't have by the end is something coherent, which she struggles to communicate ('a Living Educational Theory'.) It seems as if what she has to communicate doesn't matter to her, it's communicating at all that matters. Working through an individually-orientated action research programme has taught me about the responsibility of owning both the communication and my place as an individual within that. I have had to work very hard intellectually, emotionally and spiritually for three years before I have something to say which really matters to me in the saying. It matters to me as well, unlike in my story, that it matters to you. Do I communicate with you? Have I given you reason to care as well? Can you relate to this 'T' that has struggled to find her own voice and its significance amongst other voices? This 'T' that has suffered to know great joy? This 'T' that presents her own living educational theory with apprehension, with delight, and most of all, with love.

The Creation of Educational Knowledge and Living Educational Theories by Individual Practitioners

As in the previous two parts of this section, the notion of educational theory being constituted by the descriptions and explanations of practitioners as they seek to improve their practice (Whitehead, 1989b) does not exist in isolation. It is also in dialectical relationship to the 'T' as a living contradiction and its insertion into an action reflection cycle; indeed, aesthetically there is something wholesome in such a

morphology: the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts, and its form and content can embody a symbiosis. It is through the dialectic that something profoundly educational is able to occur and I think my own educational development (in which I see the achievement of my students as partially validating principles) testifies to this. Maybe this constitutes another reason for my interest in such a form of action research, and in the emergence of my own contribution to educational knowledge and theory. Through coming to an understanding of a standard of judgement which I term an aesthetic morphology, I am claiming that I have enhanced the educative nature of my educative relationships. Part of the aesthetic is expressed through the value-judgements which I and my students have been able to exercise in our practice and use to understand and enhance the significance of our educational development. Before I write about my work with Sarah I would like to offer you the conclusions I have come to about what it is I do want from educational literature, educative relationships and the educational processes that I engage in with my students and the reasons why I would like the present writing to become located within the action research collection here at Bath. It seems here that such writers as Hayward (1993) and Walton (1993) exemplify in their explanations of their educative relationships and search for a narrative form of expression, exactly those educational values with which I would like my own work to become associated. Here, then, is what I want:

*** I want a presentation of educational ideas that does justice to my insight that there is a dialectic between knower and known that can be interpreted as creative and representative of educational meaning.**

*** I want a form of communication that confirms the healthily symbiotic**

nature of form and content.

*** I want my students and I to explore our worlds in such ways that promote both autonomy for individuals and yet collaboration towards individual health and the creation of a good social order.**

*** I want to embrace those descriptions and explanations of emancipatory action researchers who seek to improve their practice and the quality of learning.**

*** I want to reveal through my work my belief in the worthwhileness of humanity through their individual and collective aspirations towards goodness, truth and beauty.**

*** I want to reveal through my work my respect for people's individuality and their potential to lead good and productive lives.**

*** I want to reveal my knowledge that individual human beings and a good society are greater than the sum of their individual parts.**

I want a form of educational representation which does justice to my understanding that it is within a constant struggle to find with my students where the responsibility for the ethics, collaboration, democratic practices, social justice, goodness, truth, and beauty, etc. resides at any given moment in our discourse, that the aesthetic of such a relationship rests.

*** I want to take as ontologically and epistemologically meaningful, my**

experience that it is through the enhancement of democratic practices in educational establishments, that valuable learning can occur and be beneficial for individuals and for the contexts in which they live and work.

* I want to reveal through my work my respect for the individuality of humans and their potential to lead good and productive lives.

* I believe that the above can help to move the world to a better place.

B: How can I reveal the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationship with Sarah?

Introduction:

I believe that my claim to be evolving an original contribution to educational theory partly rests in the following writing about my work with one of my PGCE students this year, Sarah. I recognise the possible criticism of concentrating mainly on one student. However, as the previous section has revealed, I believe that my work with Sarah is indicative of my work with the other students, as you will have seen in the examples I have given already. As always in my work with individual students, I am going to attempt to portray something of the impetus within our collaboration towards a synthesis between the student's (in this case Sarah's) values, her actions and her insights. Because my work with her does not operate within a vacuum but is, at the beginning of the process in particular, and as I have already started to show, dependent upon the learning I experienced last year with Justine and the year before

that with Zac, I will structure this part of the thesis in the following way:

- a) I will show the start of my work with Sarah with flashbacks from critical moments in previous years from which I have been able to develop more educational strategies in my dealings with Sarah.
- b) I will show the latter part of my facilitation of Sarah's action enquiry through a concentration on the process as it unfolds.

I am now going to present my central thesis. I have intuitions and a degree of educational judgement as to how it will proceed, and at the moment my rationale for what I am going to write looks like this:

I would like to reveal to you, and to myself as well, what is the significance of drawing out an aesthetic morphology in my educative relationship with one student in particular, Sarah (1992-1993). Through an analysis and reconstruction of our educative relationship over about four months, I also intend to show my own educational development since the formation of my original research question: 'How can I better facilitate those Initial Teacher Education students during their second teaching practice as they undertake action enquiries?' As the following narrative unfolds I hope to show how and in what ways the interconnectedness of all the aspects so far considered as constituting my own understanding of an aesthetic in an educational enquiry - the indissolubility of goodness, truth and beauty, democratic processes in action, concern for social justice, collaborative enquiry, authenticity - are present or otherwise in this particular relationship. In addition, this is further contextualised through the ways in which the ethics Sarah and I (and also her pupil Hugh) bring to our actions in the educational processes.

In addition to this focusing on one student, I am going to be concentrating on our conversations, letters, diaries - and her final report in particular - as a way of characterising our educative relationship as a whole. In the evaluation at the end of the writing-up process, the students revealed to me three clear stages of their enquiries, an insight which was universally shared. These were: the initial stage of finding the question, then the action which followed and finally an intense but short period of writing up. Because this is how they characterised their experience I shall keep to these parameters for the rest of this section. I will give some detailed analysis in order to show you the ways in which I am approaching the whole relationship from the point of view of the educational, developmental, ethical, epistemological and aesthetic issues within our research. (I use the term 'our' here intentionally.)

There is another reason for my concentration on this initial conversation which becomes an increasing focus of epistemological significance. During this dialogue we strive towards finding a question which will act in a generative way for Sarah's practice, that will contain and yet enhance her educational values. The process of coming to an educational question, is, I will be claiming, symptomatic of all the values which underpin the ideas and the practice inherent within it. I believe its generative potential makes this process one of the most important.

I will take a largely chronological approach in terms of my work with her, analysing aspects of the first tentative steps towards collaboration as a means by which you can understand the consequences and significance of what follows I will at first interpolate comments of an evaluative nature

about the work with past and contemporary students, in particular Zac (1990/91) and Justine (1991/92), in order to reveal both my own educational development and that of my students. This will be principally so at the stage of forming the question, as I am claiming within the rest of this thesis, that it is a vital and wholly permeating process within an action enquiry. It is not only that my students appear to have learnt a great deal at this stage, but that I have as well.

In a sense I am asking you to hold two ideas together at this stage: I want you to see the following as an explanation for my own educational development as well as my students'; I also want you to begin to understand the intimate relationship between my development and theirs, in the sense that the aesthetic as I perceive it, which arises out of our educative relationships, lives and has meaning at that point of fusion between my development and theirs. Just as the ethics of our practice are negotiated, so too the aesthetics of the joint process is a dialectic between values and intentions. This also accords with the argument about the necessary synthesis and symbiosis within organic processes designed to enable educational and creative growth. I believe it is only if you hold at one moment these two ideas, with the critical openness to perceive the epistemological importance of their fusion, that much of the significance is expressed.

I will also be representing this process of my educative relationships with Sarah and others through the following spectrum. Through my research I have been struck by how much learning occurs through critical moments in the relationship and within the educative process itself. I would characterise 'critical moments' as expressions of tension, confusion and

sometimes negative energy which arise seemingly 'out of the blue' (to one or both of the parties) but whose roots and ramifications lie very deep indeed within the structure of the process which is being followed. They may not however, be critical for both people. The intricacy of unthreading these lines of meaning leads in my experience and it would seem, that of my students, to some profound and lasting learning. How I and the student respond at those moments seems to me to be epistemologically relevant, and wholly indicative of the relationship. This factor is vitally important for three reasons. First I believe that it will enable you to see a development within my ability to facilitate my students' work: how I deal with the 'crises' throughout the period of my research will show a development in my ability from Zac to Sarah. It is a way of keeping tabs on my own educational development. Secondly my students have attested to how much the resolution or otherwise of their crises mattered to them in their own development of insights, professionalism and growing awareness of their own educational knowledge.

However, this method of illumination serves a further purpose. Let us take a work of art as an analogy, for example Bach's Matthew Passion. In these circumstances 'Passion' means a narrative constructed from the Gospels and set to music, and it depicts the suffering of Christ on the cross. This one is almost operatic in its dramatic intensity. At a key point, a critical moment, the choir, representing the mob surrounding the three crosses, is asked by the Pilot whom of the fated men it will save, Christ, Barrabas or another thief. The question is sung melodiously, gently. There is little hint of what will come. A shocking incantation in three dissonant tones corresponding to the syllables in Barrabas' name suddenly hangs in the air. It is stark and unremitting in its horror. My point here, is that this

moment is symbolic of the whole of the Passion. If one interprets these few bars in sufficient detail, one finds Bach's intentions in the music, its instructional purpose, his comment on the prevarication of human beings, the pathos of Christ's suffering, the appalling magnitude of what has been done to the world and our responsibility for it. In those three shouts from the choir, the abandonment of personal morality and responsibility to collective cowardice and its consequent anarchy, are prefigured in awesome isolation. Bach shows human failure, as opposed to divine courage and dedication in those moments, unequivocally and without mercy. What constitutes for me the aesthetic value of this moment in the Passion is Bach's ability to combine representations of responsibility, and human frailties in a form which trades harmony for dissonance in the same shocking way that the crowd trades goodness for expediency. It is a deeply moral debate that Bach portrays (not only for its divine connotations - and as someone who is not Christian, these do not engage me very much) but for the universally human paradoxes that he presents, engages with, and finally resolves. All of the above insights have, for me, grown out of the experience of those few musical critical moments. If what is meant by such moments can be understood in terms of the creator's intentions for the whole work of art, then these critical moments are clearly significant and have something to communicate of more than descriptive and atmospheric importance. It is the link between such moments and the whole in which an aesthetic evaluation can be helpfully made. By helpful, I mean that which enables a greater participation in, and understanding of, the work of art as a whole. And again I allude to the moral significance of this attempt to render Truth in ways which combine intention and form within a beautiful synthesis.

In my educative relationships, critical moments have increasingly determined my view of what constitutes development both for myself and my students. Whereas once I shied from such moments, as I will show, now I am learning to embrace them as of possibly the greatest significance within the processes that we undertake together. I have also embraced them in the sense that they lend a cohesion and coherence to the purpose of the relationship. They are, it seems to me, the external manifestation of internal conflicts, and unresolved tensions, concerned very often with ethical considerations and therefore contain an enormous potential for learning. I am making the claim that an organic growth lies at the heart of a healthy educative process, and will constitute much of the aesthetic understanding and value which I can gain from it. To illustrate this I must therefore relate to you these moments with their significance, developments and ramifications. For the changing ways I deal with these critical moments become themselves an ontology of practice as well as symptomatic of educational development.

I) Finding the Question: A Question of Focus

Introduction to the Action Research Postgraduate Programme.

On 5.2.93. I gave my lecture of the year to all 160 PGCE and UG students on 'improving learning in the classroom'. On 22.2.93., their second teaching practice began. I had called two meetings before teaching practice commenced in which I answered questions from students who thought they might undertake enquiries. This compares very similarly with my practice last year. In 1990/91, Jack Whitehead gave the initial lecture which Zac characterised as:

'a useful start, but I wondered how much I would be able to do it

justice.' (18.2.91)

Justine's reaction to my lecture was:

'I don't know how much it helped me really. We'd already started to talk by then, so I suppose I was biased early on. I already had a sense of it. It's difficult for me to judge.' (conversation, 28.2.92)

This year Justine and I ran the lecture together and we tried to create an atmosphere of collaboration, rather than me being some sort of expert delivering knowledge from on high. Justine's involvement showed the democratic nature of emancipatory action enquiry. At the end of the lecture, I gave out a booklet called 'Action Research and the Special Study', in which I had detailed the action enquiry cycle, ways in which it could be implemented, and attempted to contextualise it within educational knowledge and theory on an international level.

Sarah's comments about the lecture were that it was not particularly stimulating, although she could see what Justine and I were trying to do. She did not feel that we carried it off. She had already decided that action research was something she would probably want to become involved in so it was not so important that it did not inspire her too much. She wondered about the appropriateness of holding a lecture on an ostensibly negotiated and collaborative process anyway. I have to agree with her.

Students went off to their second teaching practice armed with Whitehead's action planner, and four dates for their diaries about the Validation meetings. These were a strongly advocated part of the

programme. The students were self-selecting in the sense that they could opt in to the programme entirely through their own choice; they were also free to opt out of it if they decided at a later stage it was not suiting them. However my letter to them at the beginning of their teaching practice included this:

I am hoping that you will be able to attend these validation meetings, as they are crucial in helping you to focus on the claims you are making, the data you are gathering and any new questions which are emerging. I am offering you four meetings and would hope for your attendance at at least three of them. In addition... I am around on Monday evenings, between 4.30. and 6.30 to answer any individual questions. Don't leave it too long to ask. I will be happy to do whatever I can to help you...I have arranged the meetings for Thursday evenings, as it seems that some of you at least have negotiated half-timetables on those days. I have allowed two hours so that people who are far from the University will have time to get here.
(18.2.93)

With Zac and his contemporaries (eight students in all), I arranged meetings on a much more ad hoc basis, not fully understanding the necessity for validation as a way of focusing learners' development. Last year with Justine's group (ten students) I arranged four meetings at the outset, but did not plan the learning agenda within which the students could discuss their own development and the pupils' learning. I was confused about my own right to impose a curriculum of learning on students and my responsibility as an educator. My own learning journal (prolific by now) did not even contain reference to the need for a more intentional structure. I see that now as testament to my lack of insight into

the necessary systematic nature of an action enquiry to improve the quality of learning, mine, the students' and of course, the pupils'. There were issues which came up, of course in this first validation last year, such questions as:

'Should I be working on issues of bias (my bias) with my sixth form, or looking at my Year Ten History group?' (Justine, Validation I, 8.3.92.)

And we dealt with issues as they came up, rather than having a particular agenda within which students could find the time to create their own, and start to understand the processes of an action enquiry. My first letter to the 1992/93 group, however, ended as follows:

You would probably also find it helpful if you were to bring the following with you:

- 1) Any data you have, like taperecordings, pupils' comments, journals, lesson evaluations, observed lesson-notes, etc.*
- 2) Any reformulated questions.*
- 3) Any doubts!*

Best wishes,

This year I clearly started with a programme of learning within which the students could discuss their own needs and development. It is significant that the first item on this agenda concerns the pupils.

This first meeting, then, took place on 11.3.93. Thirteen students attended.

Two gave apologies and I wrote to them the next day to inform them what had happened.

Introducing Sarah.

Of the first meeting she wrote this:

'Thursday's Validation Meeting: This was valuable in that it concentrated my mind, made me feel a lot less desperate in that it gave constructive pointers as to what to do next. It was also valuable in that I discovered Richard (another student) is doing work in the same area. I came out of the meeting knowing that I need to target a few pupils and 'start small'. I also need to get my data collection sorted out. But before that I need to imagine my solution more clearly and that is what has been going on in my mind...sheaves of differentiated worksheets is not what I want, so what is?' (Sarah, letter to Moira,

14.3.93)

In what is to become a hall-mark of Sarah's way of working, she reflects upon the process, attempts to see what it means and then poses questions. I can take no credit for her clarity of thought. She already shows a clarity about the steps of an action enquiry. I can say, however, that right from the beginning I was trying to provide a framework within which she could get the most out of the time she had. I mean this in terms of her understanding what she was doing, why she was doing it, and the effect that her way of teaching and interactions with children would have on their learning and her own.

The rest of her first letter to me contains her thoughts linked to future

action. She made an appointment to see me on the 18.3.93, giving me the detailed letter to reflect upon prior to the meeting. At this stage her question is:

How can I make the English National Curriculum accessible, exciting, challenging to?...I don't quite know how to finish.

Her letter ends with:

I want to talk to you about data collection which is worrying me. I've already thought about my own diary, pupils' learning logs, questionnaires, and National Curriculum levels...I'm not sure if video and tape-recorders in the classroom are appropriate.

The scene was set for our first tutorial meeting. And largely she had set the agenda. And I was learning that through channelling the insights of the students in a focused way in these two-hour meetings, they could also be free to express their own needs in educative ways. I am struck by the way in which Sarah says what she needs, how focused already she is on triangulating her data-collection, and showing the beginnings of a real commitment to enabling self-direction amongst her pupils:

'I am impressed by the way pupils started to set their own agenda. If I can have the confidence to build on this, it will give the pupils more autonomy.' (see above)

There is, it seems to me in these comments a genuine understanding of the need for the teacher to be confident to facilitate confidence in others.

Neill (1968) Rogers (1984) and Holt (1982, 1983) take this further in the sense that they accord to this confidence a leading to educational benefits, in that it facilitates democratic processes with children, so that they become responsible for what they learn and how they learn and that in so doing their learning becomes a deeper process and more lasting. At this stage, Sarah's commitment to this autonomy is implicit and incipient rather than stated in her practice and its significance fully exploited. This is an area for development in terms of an emancipatory action enquiry.

Much of my future facilitation with Sarah is based upon this particular comment from her, as it resonates both within my own values and also I have seen its efficacy (the value of promoting autonomy for learning with pupils and students). Zac's concern was to straddle the dialectic between enabling autonomy and ensuring physical safety within the laboratory, a dialectic he wrote about:

'Contradiction, no rights, no freedom, no status, no respect. It's no wonder they switch off...I want to treat them as equals. We are all human beings, let's give each other the chance to act as such - give them the freedom to learn and develop as individuals.'

In a paper I wrote (Laidlaw, 1991b) about the characteristics of our educative relationship, I included this from my diary:

'I talked to Zac about autonomy and freedom to learn and it seems that there is a hierarchy of values operating...It is all right not to nurture individual freedom at times if it is for the greater good, whatever that is. And however that is defined. I feel I am learning a great deal

from my work with Zac. He wants to find out so much. I wonder what he is learning from me, or whether I am simply providing the atmosphere in which he can learn...' (p.14)

I think I was still at this stage considering that an atmosphere for learning was comprised only of the absence of hurdles. In other words I was always available to talk with him about his concerns (a practice I still adhere to in my teaching), consistently operating an open-door policy. I wrote to him when he needed to know something or talked as the case may be. I was still not structuring his learning sufficiently. I understood in theory the value of autonomous learning, the right for the learner to drive her/his own learning, and that the ownership of processes denoted deep learning and self-esteem. However, there was not yet in this view of learning much challenge. I have very little evidence from Zac in his final report from the pupils' learning. He writes still on their behalf. I am sure that one of the reasons for this was that I neither overtly stressed the educative significance, nor lived out the value, of challenging him to widen his perceptions in expressions which emerged as the result of his own experience and insights, and which might by extension be lived out with his pupils.

It is working with Justine that enabled me to append to Rogers' (1984) notion of unconditional positive regard the idea, 'with educational intentionality'. She developed in her action enquiry the notion of differentiation through attitude, in relationship with one student, Lee, whose anti-school stance made it impossible for her to deal with him as she would the other pupils. She set up a series of work specifically for him and gradually, although signs are scant, Lee began to determine his own

learning patterns in his History lessons. He was just beginning to become an autonomous learner and in the appendices to her report, his work shows a clear progression from careless, scrappy indifference to someone who is in the position to begin to ask questions. Neither Justine nor I really recognised the potential significance of what she began to achieve with this difficult pupil either in terms of his learning, or ours as educators. I feel both Justine and I were doing then what Bassey (1992) talked about at his presidential address at (BERA):

“I don’t use research, I just play my hunches’. That is certainly one way of creating education: by playing hunches, by using intuition, without challenge, and without monitoring the consequences.” (p.3)

I had much still to do to convert Bassey’s first principle of educational research (playing hunches) to his third one:

‘Creating education through asking questions and searching for evidence. It is creating education through asking about intentions, by determining their worth, by appraising resources, by identifying alternative strategies, and by monitoring and evaluating outcomes. It is creating education through research.’ (p.3) (my emphasis)

It seems to me that what characterised my own educational development was centred upon the realisation of the necessity for educational challenge, of embracing the critical moments, and of perceiving the significance of so doing.

Before I go into the conversation with Sarah on 18.3.93., I want to evaluate

where I had got to with her at this early stage. Or rather where I had come to in my thinking about her. (All of the comments I write about Sarah have been shown to her for her ideas and evaluation as to their fairness and appropriateness.) I also want to draw your attention to the method I will be using to analyse my conversation with her.

To an evaluation first. I wrote in my diary:

15.3.93. I am most impressed with Sarah's action planner. I like the way in which the pupils' significance is being emphasised right from this early point. She clearly works systematically already and has internalised some of the notions about accountability for her actions in terms of pupil learning. This means that I will have less to consider in terms of enabling this understanding which last year with Justine I think I was beginning to take on board. Its full understanding, explanation and development through the course of the enquiry will largely determine the quality of what she is able to do in the name of her enquiry. I must remember this time that it is in the name of something that we act in education. We don't simply inaugurate something and let it run. It has, like freedom, many rules. Like a poem, it may appear effortless, but it is highly structured if it is saying anything worthwhile. For without the dialectic between form and content (or freedom and licence) there is no progression, no meeting point of meaning.

Before I embark on looking at my practice with Sarah, I would like to place it in the context by which I am going to be analysing and explaining it. Two recent journal entries and an excerpt from a former writing will serve to show you the filter through which I am going to understand and evaluate

my practice throughout this thesis. I will be writing about the notion of Practical Criticism applied to Education. I wrote about it in my *Guide to Action Research* (Laidlaw, 1992c) in the chapter on the role of the critical friend:

The word 'critical' suffers from a bad press. To most people it has only negative connotations. 'Critical' means to pull apart and to destroy... I come from a background in which the concept of the 'practical criticism' of literature was not viewed in (a negative way)... 'Practical criticism' was the part of my English degree devoted to the analysis and explanation of difficult texts, and the aim of it was to illuminate for the reader concepts that were difficult to understand at first reading. The 'analyst's' job was not to obscure, not to rip apart, but to reconstruct and make comprehensible something that was worth reading. I view that as the principle job of the 'critical' friend. S/He has to interpret and listen, to play back what the researcher is trying to reveal, to illuminate where there is any ambiguity, and to challenge where there is any untruth. S/He has to watch and become involved in the life of the researcher's classroom and to reveal to the researcher the reality that is being played out there. S/He has, if possible, to point out inconsistencies and draw together common strands.' (p.27)

I see this as an important insight because it frames the educational experience and consequent insights in a way which is creative, and responsive to the dynamics inherent in any living process. It also highlights the similar nature of the role of the critical friend and the literary critic who attempt to illuminate, not to obscure.

In my journal, then, I wrote the following:

'19.5.92. How Can I Learn To Tell Tales Without Lying?

I've had a sort of revelation...Educational Practical Criticism...Yet even that could become entirely conceptual and lack the interdependence

necessary between form and content to achieve authenticity and verisimilitude. Problem? Well at least for me, is that the analysis takes over and becomes the dominant authorial eye. There is a value in that, but even in my last paper about Zuber-Skerritt (1992) ...I find, to my surprise that the analytical first section speaks far more to me than the later section on the transcripts of my work with Justine, (a PGCE student with whom I conducted much of my work during 1991-1992) but I have yet to learn two things. First how to integrate analysis with intuition, and thus make it all consistent, and secondly how to present such authenticity in a way which speaks its authenticity, in which such an attempt is rendered transparent to the reader... However, let's look at the quality of writing, because it seems to me that therein lies a deeper level that I have not perceived anyone coping with. Stephen Rowland (1991) and Richard Winter (1991) manage something of this inner consistency with a quality of writing which deepens the significance and meaning of what they are trying to say.'

As I struggled here to understand the nature of the significance of inner consistency, I started to realise how powerful an idea was the notion of Practical Criticism applied to my educational practice and insights.

'When Coleridge wrote The Ancient Mariner it was an attempt to tell a moral tale...He wrote a prose gloss to go alongside it, because a telling of it in a different way, increased the authenticity of what he was writing about. So he experimented with a form that has not been done before, I believe, and through the cross-referencing made possible by the two forms side by side he managed to present the reader with a sense of dislocation which is at the heart of the poem, as well as deepening the

narrative exposition...I want the form of my criticism to mirror what it is trying to say and this has never been an aim of literary critics. If this form actually enhances the meanings which can be derived from it, if through a reading of a text, a reader gets closer to the original purpose of the writer then surely it is a step forward in such an approach to rendering the text (the reality) of another transparent, or at least more transparent.'

I have always been irritated by Practical Criticism which seeks to render the critic clever and the work under scrutiny flawed. The approach I advocate is not to overlook flaws, but it is to render the work comprehensible in all its manifestations and complexity. As an undergraduate I posited the idea that the critic should almost be rendered invisible, in order to further illuminate the literary value. I went on to write:

'I now know instinctively what a piece of work about my educational development with Justine as the focus will look like. A synthesis between something which tells the story with its atmosphere, reality and focus, and attempts to explain why it was so. All in one. I don't mean that I want to imprint the process with a formula, but I now know the kind of creative process that is necessary to achieve what I feel I am capable of.'

I wanted to re-present moments of my educational practice in ways which got to the heart of the meanings which emerged from them and affected my future work. That could not mean that I simply reported verbatim what was said during, for example, a conversation with a student or a colleague. It is not simply a conversation, it is the meanings and reality which accrue from that after reflection and always when possible,

negotiation with the other person/people concerned, which enable meanings and significance to be born, to be nurtured and to mature. This form of 'Educational Practical Criticism' should illuminate and not merely show the erudition of the author. It seems also fitting to me that in judging a living art form, that I should subscribe to a form of analysis which can highlight the significance of the symbiotic relationship between form and content. Beardsley (1958/1981) writes about this connection thus:

'In aesthetic experience we have experience in which means and ends are so closely interrelated that we feel no separation between them...the end is immanent in the beginning, the beginning is carried up to the end... (p.576) (my underlining).

Bungay (1987) expresses a related idea thus:

autonomous identity and structured development are common to art and philosophy, but philosophy gives explicit reasons for the way it is, whereas art does not go as far as to point things out explicitly.' (p.68/9)

Although I must then be cautious about overstatement (for a work of art does not state its parameters it simply embodies them), the 'living' element of the art form in which I am engaged necessitates a process of evaluation which is also committed to Truth and Goodness as well as its expression through Beauty. Bungay's insistence upon each moment:

'being related to other moments so that it must be thus and not otherwise, both determining them and determined by them,' (p. 63),

is exactly the way of relating to my practice, the experience of it, my writing about my practice, the educative relationships I am involved in, which I believe to be an integral orientation for what I am about here.

In a subsequent diary entry written as a direct response to the earlier one, I included this:

'10.12.92. I see now so much more clearly how my thinking has moved forward; not that I deny the reality or the meaningfulness of what I wrote before but simply that the moving into a practical domain now, into action, seems almost like a sacred one. No longer do I see it as somehow a corruption of an ideal but the realisation of one. My stories kept that distance between one reality and another. Now I'm saying I want both, and within education I can help to bring about a synthesis...In the explanation of this idea will emerge something I believe to be more significant than anything I have written...If there is within Practical Criticism a way of thinking which necessitates an approach which illuminates without destroying..and this way of thinking is largely determined by notions of the aesthetic... then good Practical Criticism enables us to come closer to an understanding of how the aesthetic has been realised within a bounded system (like a poem for example). Such notions applied to an analysis of an educative relationship for example, could reveal what is wholesome, good, true and beautiful about such a process (within the context of teacher education and emancipatory action research) then I think this contribution should be coined in such a way as not to violate the reality of being in such a relationship. If our writing...can only ever aspire to a representation, then let us make that representation work on all levels of our ability to understand it...The

criteria should not only enhance the document itself, it becomes a way of judging it.

I believe this latter idea to be crucial in terms of my developing understanding of the importance of verisimilitude in writing about education. Inner cohesion and coherence are two of the ways in which some people (myself included) judge works of art.² I want as well, and this is clearly linked, to evaluate and analyse the conversations I have in my practice with colleagues and students through the criteria of inner consistency and verisimilitude. In other words, **does the way I talk and listen, the way my students and colleagues respond, mirror our avowed intentions? Are we true to ourselves in our practice? How can I show this, or the lack of it, through a kind of Practical Criticism?**

F.R. Leavis (1973) comes close, I think, to an expression of the importance of the way in which the criticism is approached. He writes:

'Criticism...must be in the first place (and never cease being) a matter of sensibility, of responding sensitively and with precise determination to the words on the page. But it must, of course, go on to deal with the larger effects, with the organization of the total response, what is it? We speak of form...[which is]...interesting, as functional technique may be to the mechanically-minded and to workers in the same medium on the look out for tips, the organic is the province of criticism.' (p. 228/9)

I believe that it is essential that in the highly analytical process of a

²See the work of F.R. Leavis and Roland Barthes, both of whom are concerned to reveal what they see as the necessary fusion between form and content, and the idea that the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts. That one can, in actual fact, judge the enduring quality of a work of art through its inner symmetry.

textural exploration, I do not forget the holistic response as both are vital. To understand an experience fully, one has to, as Socrates said, hold the one and the many together. To analyse and to experience holistically.

Within my journal entry I then went on to be more specific about how the technique of judging the quality of the analysis of an educative conversation has already impinged on my work with students, and what its significance is for future practice, in other words my present practice:

'I have already started to play around with this idea in my coining of the way in which a critical friend should approach her/his work with a researcher-colleague. In the Guide I write about the need for an approach to development which highlights the process so that the researcher can start to make professional judgements about her/his practice. I am already advocating a way of working which uses the kind of Practical Criticism techniques. And indeed when I go into schools on observations, I attempt to reveal the student's practice to her/himself so that then s/he can be instrumental in the way in which change is effected. This is only taking the sense of personal responsibility for professional action to a kind of logical extension. It also adheres (which is really important to the idea of applying aesthetic standards to educational settings) to a notion I propound all the time that collaboration is one of the cornerstones of learning and development. And this is another reason why I work actively in emancipatory action research of course.'

First Conversation between Moira and Sarah, 18.3.93: A Search for the Question.

SD When I wrote to you imagining the solution stage... a question I had in my mind, was, what does differentiation mean in English as opposed to any other subject? How do you implement differentiation in English and it seemed to me from my limited experience that the area where it really comes into play is when the kids start writing.

ML What makes you say that?

SD I say that because everyone can respond to literature at some level...In Year Eight some of the weakest kids were the most sensitive in their responses. I felt that they responded with all of it...When it came to writing they found it difficult. It's a big subject, they write slowly, it's difficult for them. They know it is. Some of them find it very hard to do, and so (I don't know what you think about this) but I feel that the area I really need to work on is how to support them in their writing.

ML. That's very clear. I don't necessarily have to agree or disagree. It's your enquiry. But I wouldn't say that I had noticed that it necessarily manifests itself in the writing more than in other areas... I think there are subtleties which manifest themselves just as meaningfully in the way they say things. The way they listen. But...what is it in the processes that you are engaged in, Sarah that have actually moved a child from point a) to point b)?

First it is relevant to mention that this is the longest piece of our conversations that Sarah includes in her final report. It would seem, then, to be significant for her too. This is what she writes about it:

'Moira and I began by discussing about what I now felt about

differentiation. I was becoming more focussed and sure of myself, and as a result a more focused question is emerging.'

Let us take this first section in some real detail in order to see whether the rest of my relationship with Sarah confirms the view already put forward that the whole can be realised in its parts. What is extant here that I can then refer back to to see whether it does speak for the relationship as a whole. I am doing this at this early stage for two reasons. First, I believe there is a tiny critical moment in this section for me. Secondly occurring as it did in our first face-to-face conversation, it might be seen to be indicative of things to come, or have within it the seeds of development.

As usual Sarah takes the initiative. She has come armed with questions to which she will either find answers or realise that her questions are inadequate. I stress that it is her enquiry and this is a point which I refer to again and again throughout our collaboration. I am determined right from the beginning to enable her to own the process for all the reasons so far stated in this thesis. So, Sarah starts the conversation. She sets the agenda straight away. She already at this early stage has a question formed and has thought about the ramifications of its implementation. She talks about her 'limited experience'. A possible insecurity or statement of fact. At this stage my understanding as to which is not fulsome. She goes on to qualify why she has settled on writing as significant in terms of her understanding about a pupil's development. She seems to be believing that it will manifest itself more clearly both for his understanding and hers, in the writing. My question, '*what makes you say that?*' is enabling. It states nothing. It merely allows her to develop. However, it is not just as 'simple' as that. I was aware at the time that I was not convinced by her argument

as I show in my next utterance. My statement is an invitation for her to talk, but not simply to live out the value I hold of enabling others to speak in their own voices. She seems to be taking for granted that I am offering her a space to express herself. She has started to talk. She has said first what she wanted to say. She has set parameters and goals. I don't need to convince her, it would seem, to settle down, to feel at home. She is ready for that. All this seems to me to be apparent in her opening comments. Straight to the point. So in a sense what I do next, after she has expanded, is still within this framework, but also accedes to my own understanding now developed since Justine and Zac, about challenging, very much in the sense that Bassey (1992) advocates.

What is the critical moment, then, which might be said to be interpretative of the whole of what I am trying to do? There is for me a tiny critical moment in this dialogue. I always experience a certain ambivalence and tension at the point of the dialectic between my perceived educative responsibility and my concern for the feelings of security and well-being of the student. As I wrote in the section about risk in an action enquiry with regards to CC, there is always for me this element of risk when challenging a student, or pointing out inconsistencies or inaccuracies. The student may not be aware of the risk. I might be wrong about it, but I perceive it in that way. My own living contradiction has sometimes failed to walk this particular dialectical tightrope sufficiently securely and purposefully enough. I have sometimes, like with Justine as I will explain later, erred on the side of care for the individual's feelings and sense of self as opposed to care for the student's educational potential. Failing to realise that nurturing the educational development of a student is actually a profound vote of

confidence in that person's worthwhileness. I am aware of the importance in my educative relationships of treading this narrow pathway well. For the sake of the well-being and educational development of the student.

However, Sarah's purposeful manner and direct questioning, and also the strength of her metre when she talks: *'I say that because everyone can respond to literature on some level,'* mean that she is talking with the voice of authority. There is no tentativeness in what she says. This invites me to talk with her, equal to equal. Both of us have experience in teaching English, me obviously far more than her, but still there is a common ground to explore as professional educators.

She then goes on to elaborate about her ideas on the study of writing being meaningful. It is on that premise that I can then tell her about my own experience. First though I say: *'That's very clear'*. Because it is, but it needs to be said. In my experience affirmation must be an intrinsic aspect of the work I do with students, for in affirming their experience I show them how much I value them, how much their opinions and ideas are of true importance. It must not be all I do, for like eating too many sweets, repeated affirmation after a while not only has no positive effect, but starts to become cloying. Two years ago one of Zac's colleagues, Carol Black (1991), wrote this to me in a letter which attempted to evaluate for me the work I had carried out with her on her enquiry. Much of what she said was positive, but she noted this too:

'Sometimes Moira I wonder can there be too much praise? You always were enthusiastic about what I was doing and sometimes I used to

think that perhaps you were just saying it to encourage me.' (June)³

This year, in the evaluation meeting that I held with the group, this point was made by Nigel:

'You were always positive, and sometimes I wondered whether you were just saying it at first, but you challenged me as well.' (29th June, 1993)

In my conversation with Sarah then, this affirmation is still here, but followed by something else which also bears detailed analysis. I say this:

'I don't necessarily have to agree or disagree. It's your enquiry'.

This has shades of the time when I wrote in my paper for BERA in 1991 about my work with Zac, that I would validate the experiences of my students if they were the result of systematic processes with their pupils. Whatever they were, by implication. I think the above comment to Sarah had a different tinge to it, however. The 'necessarily' qualifies and softens something which is about to come. I state then boldly that it is her enquiry. I could not be more clear about that. These two sentences set up that belief and make clear that in the end she is the one responsible for what happens. It is also a statement on my part of the belief I hold that a student should be aiming towards some appropriate autonomy.

So what have we so far in this conversation? The student is formulating her thinking. She is trying out ideas. She is speaking with some confidence about something she has clearly reflected upon. She has come

³Black, C., (1991), 'Letter to Moira Laidlaw', private correspondence.

prepared to discuss. I respond by opening up the conversation further, but in such a way as to prepare the ground for challenge. I try to express my belief, integrally, in her right to her opinions and beliefs, and the vital nature of people speaking for themselves on their own behalf. I also live out my value of enabling the other to take control where appropriate. It seems wholly appropriate to me that she sets the agenda from where she has got to. Only then can I respond in an educative way and not one which is to do with an inappropriate abuse of power. She has in a tiny way already experienced this space to define her learning for herself by the time I challenge her. Given all that, then a challenge is not only all right, it is necessary for the educative process to grow organically. This process has now the ingredients of respect for the other, of systematic enquiry, of growth and development built upon negotiation and developing autonomy in learning, and just the seeds of democratic processes. Now comes the challenge.

As challenges go, it is a gentle one, but as this is only a couple of minutes into the discussion it is right that I should be mindful of its significance. In a way my challenge is couched in terms of a complicity between us. As English teachers we share a common concern. We want children to communicate in order to understand themselves and the world better, in order to be able to play a role in it which fulfils their potential. So I can say something like:

'I wouldn't say that I had noticed that it necessarily manifests itself in the writing more than in other areas.'

Notice again the use of the word 'necessarily'. It seems to be one of my

palliative words. A softener. Having made this statement though, I must substantiate it in order for it not simply to be something which I am saying for the point of argument. Challenge for the sake of challenge. Or to assert my power. My next comment:

'...there are subtleties... in the way they say things. The way they listen,'

seems to me both in terms of curricular knowledge and its balance with facilitating someone else's education, to be sound. And then I follow this with a question which is open enough not to close down Sarah's own line of enquiry:

'What is it in the processes that you are engaged in, Sarah, that have actually moved a child from point a) to point b)?

This still leaves her to set certain parameters of meaning, but I have suggested that development is the crucial educative factor. Not writing or listening, but externalising the processes by which a pupil learns. Note as well how I use Sarah's name at this point. I am aware now of doing this at key points. It is not that the key point here is so much procedural for me as to do with knowledge and that the knowledge we derive from our practice in education seems to me necessary to begin to externalise with students so that they are not simply following routines and itineraries. I want to educate students into forms of understanding which will liberate their teaching from a potential technology of strategies (embodied as I see it within the thinking behind the National Curriculum for example) which is not of their own collaborative creation. As I state in a recent paper (1994b) about my work with Sarah:

'The process of focusing through dialogue early in an action enquiry is a way of enabling her to feel the parameters of what can be done in the name of an emancipatory action enquiry, at the same time as not limiting her potential to grow towards her own solutions. I think there are particular strengths in a pathway to professional development for the improvement of learning with the pupils, which occurs through dialogue.' (p.1)

This dialectic should, if it is as educatively rich and generative (McNiff, 1992) as I am claiming, become more and more telling as time passes, and is already here within this section manifested in me in the form of a sense of risk and outcome and in Sarah as a tension between her recognition of her pupils' potential and her understanding of what is meaningful.

What is also symptomatic in this extract is Sarah's insight at this early stage. In her first comment to me in a taped conversation, she mentions pupils. They are clearly at the forefront of her mind. Almost the whole of her second speech is about pupils' needs. I can only say that my lecture, informal talks with her, and invitation to the validation meeting stress pupils' learning, but I still feel that her grasp of the situation is outstanding. She does not yet appear to understand however, the interrelated nature of her own development with the pupils'. In this section she does not tell me how she is doing. I have never known a student not begin with herself and her insights into the way it seems to be going. Whereas in the past after a few weeks of the enquiry I have been conscious of having to shift attention from the student to the pupils, in Sarah's case the reverse might appear to be the case.

Before continuing with an analysis of that conversation and subsequent developments I want now to draw out the aesthetic morphology so far so that you can see what more needs to be done, and how it develops. You can also begin to get an idea about the way in which I am evaluating the whole process of my educative relationship with Sarah.

What is the form of this relationship so far? (Let me remind you, that I am understanding 'morphology' in both its senses, that of the form and structure of something - in this case an educative relationship - as well as the linguistic forms used to give it life and communicate its meanings.) Its concrete forms are characterised through letters written by both of us, individual contact and contact with all the other PGCE students on one occasion. As far as our linguistic communication goes, at this point in the relationship Sarah has written more than me and said about the same. She has taken control in the written form by posing questions to which I should respond. In the beginning of the conversation she dictates how we talk, but I lend that a greater complexity quite quickly: I appear to accommodate whilst actually challenging her ideas.

However, the form in which we communicate does not only consist in words but also in mood, tone, feelings and needs. It is thus difficult simply to reproduce in words. Much is lost in translation so to speak. However at this point there is a formality about the way in which we talk to each other and communicate through letters. For example she signs her first letter, '*best wishes*'. There is no humour yet in our relationship, something which it seems to me important to cultivate to inspire trust and enjoyment. No phrases appear procedurally redundant. Everything is

functional and careful.

As for the aesthetic, as it can so far be understood, there seem to me only glimmers. I am understanding 'aesthetic' as both that appreciation of the beautiful and the growing concern with the ethics between us. In this instance who is taking the responsibility and why? I perceive the aesthetic in the fact that Sarah sets the agenda at the beginning of the relationship through taking the initiative with her letter-writing and her opening question in the conversation. This shows potential for an educative relationship in which the learners' needs are at the centre, in which there is openness between tutor and student and the beginnings of trust. It also suggests a professional taking of responsibility for her actions and intentions. I perceive it more strongly in her affirmation of the value I hold very firmly concerned with placing the needs of the pupils at the centre of what she is doing. I also perceive it in her allusion in her first letter with her notes about planned actions, her concern to develop autonomy in her pupils. For the aesthetic to live in all of these cases: development of autonomy, learner-driven education, taking control of the processes, issues of fairness and social justice, responsibility for her own professional development, then Sarah is going to have to live out these incipient espoused values as of course, am I. It is likely as well that these will be the areas around which critical moments with Sarah are likely to arise, if I am right that it is in within moments that we realise the whole. At this stage then, there appears to me to be a possibility that links will develop and make coherent all the possibilities of the kind of practice that I advocate with my students and endeavour to live out myself. I am aiming for a relationship with Sarah which realises the indissolubility of goodness, truth and beauty, which sees as endemic the forces conspiring

towards democratic practice, concern for others, integrity, freedom and a justice for all. (Note: I gave an earlier draft of this work to Kevin Eames, Head of English at Wootton Bassett School for his comments and he likened my enthusiasm to the fictional Fotherington-Thomas whose only expression is 'Hello clouds! Hello sun! Hello sky!' in a kind of dreamy, 'cissy' eulogy (Willans and Searle, 1958). I think I escape the extremities of this vacuousness through my commitment to realise this joy in action. You will have to make up your own mind as to how I manage this, if at all.)

For this educative relationship to achieve an aesthetic morphology I will have to see greater links between any concrete forms (like letters) and the way in which we communicate with each other and her actions to develop a notion of the good in her practice. I mean by 'realising the good' developing ways of working with others which enhance each participant's potential to lead a life which satisfies both individually, and collaboratively towards the creation of a good social order (McNiff, 1992).)

Our conversation continues thus:

...ML I am interested. When you wrote to me, you said, 'mentally I am modifying the question to something like, 'how can I make the English National Curriculum interesting, exciting and challenging to...?' It seems to me that you have refocused, and reformulated the question much more specifically than when you wrote the letter.

SD Yeah. I have been thinking about it. It's been a week. Yes it's too huge. I cannot do that in four weeks.

ML That's right, so how can you phrase a question that shows that your

educational development has helped in the learning of at least one pupil in your care?

Here my agenda becomes clear. By repeating her earlier question I do two things. I show that I know what it is (that I am interested) and in addition I bring the conversation to the area which I perceive she is ready for, namely the formation of the question. This bringing her back to the formation of a question characterises the whole of this conversation.

She continues, naturally enough on her own agenda:

SD Yeah. (pause) In connection with writing, do you think?

ML What do you think? That's the point. That's what you've come up with, so I suggest we look at that. And maybe now we need to phrase that into an action research question.

SD Right.

ML Does that meet with what you want to do or am I pushing you?

The steps of the dance are now almost ritualised. I think in this section I am in danger of pushing her too fast. I have noticed that when my agenda becomes too clear to a student, then the power relationship in which we are working ensures that the student's voice is submerged.

Let me illustrate this. At a Validation meeting with my first set of students (1990-1991) the following conversation took place between myself, Jenny a Biology student, and Zac:

J. And what are they, your values?

Z. That's the point. You see, I wanted them to be able to respond to my commands if it were absolutely necessary, but without going against what I believe in: that we are equal in the classroom. And I can't do it. It's not possible. I realise now, that I had to be hard at first and then I could soften up a bit.

M. Jenny, you look as if you don't like that?

J. I don't. It's really sad.

M. But it's what he found.

J. Yes I know, but I still don't like it.

Z. Nor do I, but it's the reality for me.

M. And that's the point. For Zac. One of the purposes of this group is to come to share a reality that can be accepted by everyone here. I don't mean you have to agree with what Zac is saying for yourself, Jenny, but if Zac can show that he has been entirely consistent, that he has been through a process which he has systematically analysed and in the analysis of his experience he has been clear, unambiguous and consistent within himself, then surely we as a group have to accept his findings as well.'

And that certainly shut Jenny up! I have no misgivings about the beginning of the discussion: it seems to me a genuine exploration. I bring Jenny into the conversation, and even my disagreement with her is another one-liner, quite in keeping with the style of the dialogue. Note, however, how I suddenly launch into 'making the point.' I have since revised my opinion about valid knowledge always being the result of systematic analysis, as I have mentioned before in this section and elsewhere. It isn't that which so much disturbs me in this section. It is my abuse of power. I talk about a shared reality being a cornerstone of valid

knowledge, a respect for the other in a sense, and yet the whole of that last part, denies it. It is didactic and preaching. I say we have to value Zac's knowledge, but not Jenny's in effect. A strange contradiction. Within that error, I think you can see that my agenda becoming clear in such a way actually denies the voice of my student. I am through this experience of recognising my error is cutting off Jenny's insights, the value of collaborative ways of working in which negotiating our meanings through respect for each person's input has to be the cornerstone of good practice. For how much more rich and meaningful, might have been an exploration of Jenny's misgivings. But at the time I was certain of my right to intervene and 'correct'. I hope that had this conversation occurred now, I would have taken some time to explore with Jenny exactly why she was feeling as she did. Something perhaps indicative of my own educational development, is that when I included the above in a validation paper about my work with Zac, I saw it as a wholly positive contribution to the facilitation of the students' action enquiries. Now I can use it as a means of identifying how my greater experience with facilitating action enquiry leads me to find much to criticise in that occasion. Exercising an aesthetic standard of judgement here might have alerted me to the ethics of my relationship with Jenny and keep alive the dialectic between Truth and Care. (N.B. June, 1996. See Introduction, section, 3.2)

With Sarah, then, I had to try to enable her lines of enquiry to be kept fully open whilst still moving her towards formulating a way of thinking and a perspective which would enable her to encapsulate her ideas and turn them into action. Therefore I stress that it is what she thinks that matters, and that we do not reject the idea of writing. In fact I combine her concern about writing with mine in challenging her to find a question which will

pivot on writing. I have to admit that at the time I was still not convinced that writing was as significant as Sarah seemed to think. If, however, I had insisted that we talk about a question without focusing on her insights, then I would have been wrong for three reasons. First, action enquiry is about the practitioner being fully implicated in the search for improvement. If I had cut off this line of enquiry, then effectively I would have been severing Sarah's insights from her actions. It would have been doomed to failure. Secondly, my respect for her must be lived and not only voiced. I know that I have a responsibility to challenge and guide. However, I cannot teach Sarah something which only my insights tell me. Otherwise I am simply abusing my power and abusing her right to find out for herself. Gore and Zeichner (1991) comply with that belief when they state:

'This devalues teacher skill and the position of the teacher and increases the odds that teacher educators will neglect the very vulnerable condition of their students and aim straight at their goals over the heads of those they teach.' (p.122)

Thirdly, my experience tells me that someone emphasises something for good reason. Sarah has mentioned writing several times. She has thought about it, written about it in her private journal, and devoted much energy into trying to understand it. When I attempt to divert her in the first part of this conversation, she sticks with it. When I ask her to formulate a question, she immediately refers back to her concern. At this stage in the conversation I do not understand her allegiance to it. I also do not know her very well. I do know though, that people often hold onto what it is they understand (or think they understand) as a matter of security and

identity. Sarah is involved in many new experiences. She is a new teacher. She is in a new school. She is undergoing an enquiry, the likes of which she has never encountered before. She is entering an educative relationship with me and a whole set of people she has never met before, pupils, teachers, administrators. She has some firm idea about her world which I am loathe to dispel (and here the issue is not whether she or I am right, but about how I use my power within the relationship at this stage and for what reasons I use it). Because I do not understand what has led to it I believe that way forward will be finding out about it. Until I can find out whether her insistence on writing is pedagogically or psychologically formulated (in other words it is an *idée fixe*) I am hesitant to act.

A little later we reach the following point:

ML Let's talk about your question, then. I think now the time is better. To actually get your question formed. With words that are going to release your creativity rather than restrict it...How can you form a question that is going to take into account all the elements that you are concerned about?

SD We've got writing. We've got one end or the other (high attainer or not) and I'm moved to Hugh, I think...

If I were browbeating Sarah I do not think she would reiterate the point about writing. In opening up the question into something which enables, I am also enormously challenging her as well. To formulate such a question which can do all those things, is a tall order. Look at how I do stress that it must locate and open up the pathways to her concerns.

Our conversation now takes another turn. She simply does not respond at

this stage to the request to form the question. She is **not** ready. Gradually, we begin to move closer together in terms of this dance. Sarah's expression for this in her final report is this:

'We discussed the question to and fro, eventually coming up with a question that was more focused, and which I actually felt I could do in the timescale.' (my emphasis)

Her desire to describe turns into an understanding of the necessity for explanation. We are talking about whether behaviour affects learning, or learning affects behaviour and suddenly she says:

SD You could have a question like, 'how can I help so and so develop his learning in this module, or this aspect of work?' I suppose that would do. It's quite tight, isn't it? (writes down questions so far)

ML Yes, except learning is huge.

(laughter)

This is the first time there has been any laughter in the relationship. After all, learning is rather a large field! But it breaks the ice in a most significant way. I play back the tape at this point at her request. For a moment afterwards, she sits quietly, reflecting. She goes on:

SD So I talked about how can I develop his learning and you talked about learning being a huge area, so then you talked about writing skills.

ML Now, writing skills, how do you feel about that?

SD Both these kids, their behaviour is not good. I think getting them engaged in their work would moderate that. I am thinking about what

you said about how you can recognise and monitor progress and that can change behaviour, so that would be a way of measuring success.

ML Then we could keep the question of learning rather than writing, because it would be difficult to prove that with an idea of improvement in behaviour...

SD ...So back to this question. We can either have, 'how can I help so and so to develop an understanding'...and then I've written down, ' How can I help X become engaged with this module, and thereby moderate his behaviour?', or perhaps that's actually...

ML Do you mean 'moderating'? That's quite neutral. Moderating means changing...

SD ...How can I help so and so become engaged with the Green Module?' It's sharper than 'how can I help X with his learning?'

A real turning point. Sarah alludes to the fact that I keep the notion about writing alive in the conversation, and by doing so I think I am living out my belief in respect for the other. It seems no longer pedagogically risky to do so. She is still determining the pace and the form of the conversation. She comes to her own formulation of the question, even overthrowing the notion of learning, for engagement. This very skilfully combines her concern about the pupil's behaviour with learning. I am responding but always in the back of my mind is my educative responsibility: *'do you mean 'moderating?' and 'it would be difficult to prove that,' and the biggest gamble, 'we could keep the question of learning rather than writing.'*

I felt that my agenda for this conversation had been achieved at this stage, except for the one which is always overarching, and that is my balancing

the student's perceived needs and those needs I perceive as educative for her.

As the conversation progressed now, I posed her the following question which clearly had great significance. She refers to it time and time again in her final report:

'In an account of your professional development, can you show that any pupil has learnt anything of value and has taken any responsibility for that learning?' (p.33)

In our conversation something very meaningful evolves from that point. Sarah asks:

SD The other thing is, how do we see success?

I reply quickly:

ML How do you see success? How would Hugh see success?..That's a vital point. It's just come to me. I've never asked that question before. I have always said to the student, how will you measure success? But of course, if we're talking here about how an account of your professional development is going to reflect the learning of your pupils, then in some guise or other, in some way that's right for you, you are going to have to square that with Hugh's ideas.

SD And that's about him having responsibility for his own learning. Wow! That's really neat. That puts him in a strong position...It's not imposed, it's his choice. It's the key, isn't it? Choice. So that's honestly it.

I've got to have at least one meeting with him.

There is so much going on in this extract. I am thinking out loud. I am clearly involved in an honest exploration with Sarah. At this moment, we are both discovering new insights. There is an enthusiasm and vitality about our voices and our metre. I am perceiving in a new way, the intricate nature of our own development with that of the other learners in the situation, something I want my students also to understand. This extract attests to a desire to democratise the learning process, and actually shows it happening. Sarah and I, at this point, reach an equality in terms of our power to explore educational issues. This striving towards equality is one of the main driving forces for me in education. I am reminded of Shakespeare's final comment at the end of 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona':

'We came into this world as brother and brother.

Let us go then, together, not one before the other.'

I do not mean a forced camaraderie, or an inappropriate matiness, but a recognition of our similarity as seekers after fairness, justice for ourselves and others and the right to speak. A celebration of some of those aspects which can, I believe, render human existence meaningful and worthwhile, and ontologically satisfying. The first step perhaps towards something which Justine said she felt we had achieved towards the end of our collaboration last year:

'We seem to have moved from tutor/student to critical friends'.

There is a suggestion of an educative equality, it seems to me in my educative relationship with Sarah even at this early point. This is not something which I have consciously sought in my educative relationships, but which seems to be a side-effect of exploring ideas together systematically, becoming accountable for ways of working, and both being open to challenge.

Within this section we see Sarah's confidence in her growing understanding. She is making profound links as a result of a link I have made, which I have in turn been able to make because of our conversation and her insistence on driving the discourse. It is she who reminds me of the criteria for success which I have talked about at the original lecture and expressed in the special study guide notes (Laidlaw, 1992g). It is she who recognises the place of these criteria in our discussion. I remember at the time sitting back in awe at her grasp at such an early stage. She has had only a few weeks in which to start understanding some of the most profound educational knowledge which can emerge from individually-oriented action research. I have had years.

We conclude the conversation with this:

SD It's this whole thing about the educational process - rather than lecturing, telling, actually finding out, letting them think for themselves. Letting me think for myself. (my emphasis).

ML There is no understanding I can give you. It might be lying dormant and I can switch it on. Or perhaps I should say we can switch it on together... I think you will find an educational way of doing it all. The moment will arrive....

SD *That's right. Criteria for success for both of us...I think we've got there for the time being.*

ML *Yes, I agree.*

Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose! And yet not so. Sarah finishes the conversation just as she started it. She has completed what she wanted to complete. But look how she sums up. She is beginning to take the lead not only in the form (the morphology) of the process, but also in the ideas underpinning it. I would say that there was a greater expression of the aesthetic at this stage of the educative relationship than there was at the beginning of the same conversation. If a learner can sum up this would suggest control and ownership of the material. This is already the case with Sarah. In addition she is not only summing up ideas, she is living out the values of speaking for herself, of educative concern for others, of challenge and systematic enquiry, and the beginnings of notions about accountability to others for the work she does in the name of education. Some of that accountability she is now realising in an integrated way with her understanding about how to proceed, is to do with her pupils.

In her final report on this point she poses herself the question:

'Did he learn anything of value? First I needed to ask, whose value?

Unfortunately, due to my inexperience, I neglected to ask Hugh directly if he had learnt anything of value. This is a pity because I think he would have given me an answer.'

She now understands the value of asking Hugh, whereas before it was an ideal. That she has not done so is only in a sense mildly disappointing. She did ask him, however, about how he perceived his own

improvement:

SD Where do you think you might have improved?

Hugh: In research.

And indeed Hugh writes about this in his final evaluation of his own work which Sarah quotes in her report:

'I have done my research very well when they was not enough information but I wrote a letter to esso house asking them for some info on cars and pollution and they sent me some.'

In our conversation she has said:

SD It's about him having responsibility for his own learning...That puts him in the strong position.

What is also significant here is that Sarah is in the conversation giving him a theoretical power over the validity of what she does. She turns this into practice within her enquiry and the final write-up. If action research is about, as Kincheloe, 1991, expresses, amongst other things a:

'necessary focus on the spoken and written words of students in order that the teacher might understand what they know, their goals, and the texture of their lived worlds,' (p.37)

then my and Sarah's and also Hugh's written and spoken expressions reveal our unique understanding of the world. I think that as facilitator in

an action enquiry process it is with those understandings that I can help others carve their philosophy of their own lives. The process is a tentative one from the understanding of the understandings to the challenges for growth which distinguish education from any other activity. My reticence to disenable Sarah to talk about her impression that it is within writing that she will most clearly be able to inaugurate an educational form of research, is quite the right one. I believe that through giving Sarah the space to control the pace of learning, by according her respect, through the assumption that there will be a reason for her insight, through listening and suggesting, can I encourage an atmosphere in which she can begin to take responsibility for her learning, and move forward in her research. Such an environment enables me to become clearer about how I can help her to continue to do so.

As I have shown in the first part of our first conversation, however, there is both affirmation and challenge, right from the beginning, but the affirmation must go at least as deep as the challenge in which it is contained.

II) Action: a Question of Challenge.

The issue of challenge remains the leit motif at this stage of the thesis, for it is in this educative relationship by no means one-sided. With any student I am challenged to find appropriate ways to facilitate. My acceptance of open challenges from students really tests my value-base. After having concentrated so carefully on a question in our first conversation, I came to realise how much this process of seeking a wording of one's values (which actually is what forming a question constitutes) permeates all levels of our future collaboration. In the

correspondence which follows, I would like you to note how much the wording of a new question preoccupies us both. I also choose to present this part of the educative process because there is an emphasis on the emergence of a form for Sarah's action enquiry which I will later show spreads into her final report. The rest of the account of our educative relationship I have decided to present with far less direct analysis. I believe that the time has come for Sarah to speak more on her own behalf: she has a very powerful voice.

I am going to concentrate on the results of a challenge which Sarah presented to me at the end of our second validation meeting (25.3.93). As it came to a close and people left to go, I switched off the tape, and Sarah said:

'I don't think that was a very student-centred session'.

Neither of us had time to discuss her point and I left feeling really dispirited, but not fully understanding why. I did ask her to write to me if she felt she wanted to communicate her reasons for her comment. I wrote to her the next day:

26.3.93.

I am enclosing Katie Norwood's (1992) enquiry ... I think what strikes me about it is the way in which Katie integrates her own practice, her developing understanding of her student's learning, with the wider context of the value of case-studies to educational knowledge. I think her work can stand equally side by side with published authors, as I believe that the work from this group will also have the potential to do.

I am at this stage particularly impressed with the depth of your thinking. I have thought a great deal about what you said last night about the session being student centred or not, for example. You may be right. I certainly talked a lot. It is always a very difficult line to tread between leading and pushing, being open and being directive, being structured and being restrictive. What I must try to ensure next time is being more open to your individual enquiries. I wonder whether it might be a good idea to ask all the students to let me know in advance what they want to do in the next Thursday session. I am writing to them all today as well to suggest that they see me on Mondays for individual or perhaps small group attention, or get in touch and make arrangements to see me on other occasions alone.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if there is anything I can do to help you in your enquiry. I take seriously the comments you made about the brevity of time to write up and if I can be of any help as you structure your final write-up, or in the thinking processes as you decide when to stop, then you know where I am...

On 1.4.93. she wrote to me:

...You asked me to note down what thoughts led to my comment about our last validation meeting. My feelings were that the agenda for the meeting was valuable and thought-provoking, but that I would have liked more opportunity for us, as students, to discuss some of the issues that came up. My feeling was that it might have been more valuable for us to sort out some of the answers to our own questions in a discussion - I felt that every time a question came up, you answered it. I appreciate that

time is very short and that you have masses of experience on what does and doesn't work, but I left feeling bombarded with information without having worked it out for myself. You said in the letter that you talked a lot and that was my impression too.

I feel that I'm sailing a bit close to the wind here, but I am sure that you will take my comments in the way they are intended - constructive rather than destructive. I am enjoying my Action Research and I think you are doing a great job. I feel that you are helpful, supportive and extremely approachable, which is why I am writing this. Doing this study has been a way of concentrating my mind on my educational values - and that has been incredibly worthwhile - but also I feel it has given me a much more deeply reflective approach. The Action Research has added another dimension to the PGCE course. You have been responsible for that in the questions you have asked and the areas you have offered for consideration. So I'd like to say 'thank you'!

Because of the Easter holidays I did not receive this letter until the 15th April. I then wrote straight back on 15.4.93.:

Dear Sarah.

Thanks for your letter. I've only just read it because I had to go away for a while. My father has not been well and the family (all of them, uncles, aunts, sister, brother, nephew, etc.) live in one village in Yorkshire - what a collection! Anyway I got back this morning to your letter. I am so glad you wrote. I am most pleased to think that you felt you could. I have thought a great deal about that last meeting. I knew there was something wrong with it straight afterwards. It bugged me. If you have read the

paper I wrote (Laidlaw, 1993a) then I think in there it comes close to saying why. You are not sailing close to the wind by your comments (that's what you said in your letter at one point). I think you are right in what you say. I forgot again. It happens. There is so much to do, so much to be accomplished, that I forget the people themselves, as individuals, with individual needs. Thanks for reminding me. I needed to hear it.

I think there is something really important in this and I wonder whether it will be useful for both of us if I write about it at some length. I mentioned it in the paper. It's this thing about power. There is something going on in the educative process which is to do with power norms. We have, I believe, in our heads, a fully formed expectation of the roles we play in these circumstances. We've been through the schooling system ourselves. We have an attitude ingrained to authority. It takes nerve to do what you did, basically because institutionally I hold more power than you. As I say in the paper, for the 'teacher' to be shown to be open to error, publicly, to be a learner in actual fact, is risky. For the 'learner' to become the 'teacher' and say, 'no, this isn't what was right for me and perhaps the others', is more than a superficial challenge. It cuts away the foundation of the kinds of power relationships we expect from the learning situation and which actually, I believe, create the whole of the learning environment. And if it really does do that, and I've not just gone into the stratosphere in terms of academic overkill!, then what happens? What comes in its place? And is it something which helps the learning process, this authority-web? Is it a natural phenomenon which we tamper with at our peril? Or is it something which can be outgrown? I tend to believe the latter. I hope that it can be the latter. I hope so because I would like to think that as humans we have the capacity to grow beyond the realms of

force and coercion - to grow into our potential through loving and productive relationships of all kinds. I also am beginning to believe, and I don't think I've really formulated this before, that true education (leading to deep learning and not superficial retention, say, of facts for example) occurs at the points at which some genuine negotiation about context, content and process is occurring. My only evidence (although it would not stand up to the action research validation exercise because the children's voices are not being brought forward) that I have ever helped to create such an equal relation in my own teaching career in the classroom is concerned with a group of first years. I enclose it here, not because I want to say at all, 'I've done it, aren't I clever?' but because I believe that at the heart of all emancipatory action research lies the desire to democratise the teaching in and around classrooms everywhere. I enclose it because it gives you an idea of what I aspire to with students, and what I mean by student-centred. It also shows how much I have been a living contradiction. Whitehead's term. Here I am going on about student-centredness and appropriating all the time and space at the meeting. Not actually enabling the students to at least partly drive the process. It is a shame that after all these insights in the enclosed paper, I can still do what I did at the meeting. Whitehead maintains that we do it all the time - espouse certain values and then live out other ones - and that it is from such incidents when they are pointed out to us, that we learn. I wonder whether you find that in your own experience of being in the classroom.

This business of power is a really important one to anyone who is in teaching of any kind. I believe now that when I make such a mistake, that it is not from ignorance as much as a lack of trust, probably in myself. We

exert pressure on others when we do not think that they will be able to manage something. But if we have done the right things, been truly facilitative, then the trust we are not showing them is actually a mistrust of our own ability to conduct something correctly ourselves.

I am really delighted that you have found the questioning approach helpful. This seeking of one's values (which is at the heart of all emancipatory action research) does seem to be immensely valuable to individuals in their own ways. I know that I still am, in Nigel's words, 'peeling away layers of the significance of what I'm doing', and hope that this process will long continue. With people like you around, Sarah, I can have no doubt that I will ever become complacent! This letter is a genuine vote of thanks. I know from my experience at the University that I will learn from my students every year. The exciting and slightly disconcerting side to this is that I am never quite sure when or from where the learning is going to happen.

And if I aspire to facilitate students in speaking for themselves, if that is one of the highest values I aspire to in my teaching career, then how can I possibly be anything but delighted with the letter you wrote? Do enjoy the rest of your holiday, and I look forward to seeing you at the validation meetings next term. Do come and see me to talk about your enquiry separately if you would like to. I know I'd find it interesting.

I enclosed my account of the Ancient Mariner teaching episode (Laidlaw, 1990) which I prefaced with these comments:

The following writing I have included as part of my Ph.D. which I am

this term attempting to progress with. This extract deals with an incident with Year Seven group to whom I taught English and Drama. There are a few comment afterwards which did not appear in the original article but do constitute some of my thinking since. I am trying to show the reader where I am coming from. I think that anyone undertaking an action enquiry has to ask themselves where they stand on the spectrum from autocracy to democracy and that the discovery of that is a developmental one and truly educational.

Our letters crossed. The following day I received this written on 14.4.93.:

...It's amazing how much reading one can do when someone else is doing the cooking - and I've been doing a lot of thinking too - would Thursday 22.4.93. be O.K.? I could come at lunchtime and meet you in your office at about 1.00 pm if you would like. Would you let me know one way or the other?

I'll fill you in on what has been going on since we last talked. As you will remember from our discussions, the question we arrived at was 'How can I help X become engaged with this module?' 'This module' being based on library research and the production of a leaflet/pamphlet on a green issue of the pupil's choice. One of the ways of helping my research was to interview the child I would be working with. I did this, and in doing so, our relationship has changed and he is working better in class. Looking back, I see a reasonable amount of progress during the library research part of the module. Next term we will be moving on to drafting the leaflets from notes the class have made. This will be a new phase of the module.

During the holidays I was thinking a lot about my research and especially after reading other Action Research reports and after reading Donna Brandes and Paul Ginnis on student-centred learning, I reached a new question. Or at least I think it's a new and more educational question - you may not agree. Anyway, the old question was 'How can I help X become engaged with this module?' and the new question is 'How can I create the atmosphere in which X can engage with this module?' This is what I wrote:

'Am I coming up with a new question out of all this? Not 'how can I help X to engage with this module?' but 'How can I create the right atmosphere in which X can engage with this module?' and that is a big one in my professional development. That's the key question that everything comes down to.

Unfortunately it's a much bigger question - and shouldn't I deal with the old one first? I think I need to ask Moira about this.

Strangely, but perhaps not so strangely, this is the question I wanted to address when I started thinking about Action Research. Is it appropriate though? Is it too personal, too navel-inspecting? Can I incorporate it in some way?

The difference between the two questions, or so it seems to me - and I could be wrong here, is that one focuses more on Hugh. 'How can I help this learner become engaged with this module?' i.e. what strategies can I employ, what techniques can I develop? I the teacher. This is actually teacher-centred.

The other question, 'How can I create the atmosphere for this learner to become engaged?' seems to set me in the role of the facilitator. It's student-centred - it's perverse, really.

...So in the first question, we focus more on the student, but it's more teacher-centred because I decide on the strategies (for that student). In the second, we focus more on me, but it's more student-centred because he will be able to decide on strategies.'

In addition, the second question allows more students to become involved because the atmosphere which allows one child more student-centred learning will inevitably allow others. I've also been thinking about interviewing at least one other child...

I call the second question the 'big' one because I am concerned about the way that despite my enthusiasm for an active student-centred approach, in practice it often doesn't work that way, especially when I'm tired. To be brutal, I can be aggressive rather than assertive and have a tendency to impose my will because it seems easier (subconsciously - intellectually I know it's the opposite) than motivation. This is a simplification and there are other factors too, but for me, this is where I'm a 'living contradiction', it's where, one way or another, my educational values are negated. Anyway, what I want to ask you is, what do I do next?! Is this all part of the same cycle, a side-shoot or a new thing altogether?

I wrote to you at the end of term about our last validation meeting. I've just noticed that I wrote this in my diary after the validation meeting:

'Another validation meeting - lots of focus on pupils taking more responsibility. I don't think I'm doing this with 8C. I suppose this session was for us, really - what are my educational values? If nothing else, Action Research has made me focus on them.'

As a result of that session, I've been thinking about my educational values and about pupil-centred learning. I think it was more valuable than I thought at the time(!) because it led me firmly in a direction I hadn't been considering enough.

This is a long letter, but writing has helped me to get more of an overview - even if it hasn't given you one!

I wrote back as soon as I received her letter, on 16.4.93.:

Thanks for your letter (again). It's a real treat to come in and find correspondence from you all this year. I am really pleased the way that people are writing to me and involving me in their research. It's great! I'm glad that you have managed a real break. Nice to be waited on, isn't it?

Yes of course, Thursday at one o'clock will be fine. I'll look forward to seeing you. I thought I would write now however, so that you could have a chance to think about what I say before we meet. Time is obviously at a premium for you now. Don't feel that you have to take on what I say or the implications of what I say. I cannot know exactly what your practice is like with all its unique permutations so some of what I say may be inappropriate. But you know that already!!

First I am impressed by the way in which your enquiry appears to be focusing now on a more 'educational' question, as you term it. I believe that this is one of the central aspects of any good educational action enquiry. What it seems to me you need to do first is to become quite clear

in your own mind what you mean by 'more educational' in your question. If everything you seem to be learning at the moment resolves itself into a question of an educational atmosphere, then you must consider how, in your report, you can show us what that means to you in ways which we as your validation group can sanction. What are the standards of judgement which you are bringing to bear on your practice? It is not simply that a report will require such clarity. Action researchers should be clear about it in their daily practice too. When you say that it is a much bigger question, the way you have changed it, I do not see that clearly from your letter. It has a different emphasis, certainly. Instead of tinkering around one child do you see the breadth of your question evolving through the fact that an atmosphere is not simply created around one individual but pervades the whole classroom environment? If that is so then yes, it implies enormous ramifications. I am not sure that the question is necessarily much bigger. I have found in fact that in my own enquiries and those of colleagues (people like yourselves) that complexity is the natural outcome of change and the perception of change.

You ask whether you should deal with one question first. I think, if you don't mind me saying, that you must have dealt with it to the limit of its capacity to be dealt with by you in this way. Has it not, like the chrysalis in my report, turned into a butterfly? A natural process of evolution. If you try to stay its progress you are likely to do damage to it in my opinion. Go with your reflective flow! I don't believe that your question is too navel-gazing. Are you not trying to improve the quality of one pupil's learning (specifically I mean; I know you are trying to do that with all your pupils)? I believe as well that your question as it appears now to stand,

has the potential to become more student-centred, as you clearly hope. What I would like to see now is some evidence emerging, first, that Hugh did respond better in the library research and a clear pathway towards how your question, in other words your understanding, has evolved. And this hopefully in the report and in your practice can then be shown to be systematic and intentional (to an extent. Luck, motivation, outside influences all impact on the situation as well of course!).

What you say about student-centredness failing sometimes in your practice, well I think I know all about that! Don't be so hard on yourself, but do try to learn from those times when you fail. Action Research is built on failure and for obvious reasons I don't make much of this truth at the beginning of my facilitation with students. Your own living contradiction will fuel your learning and ultimately your pupils' learning. I think you have a fair example of your own tutor's living contradiction becoming a possible point of learning for both of us. Whitehead says we should embrace failure. It is the action researcher's biggest asset. I'm not sure that I 'embrace failure' with quite such glee, but I know what he means. I enclose an article which Whitehead wrote in 1989 and which was published in the Cambridge Journal of Education. I'm not sure that all of it is relevant but the first few pages might be of interest.

I remain firmly convinced in this world of shifting values and insights, that this process of seeking one's own values as a kind of benchmark of good practice always in collaboration with others who also seek to democratise their practice, is enormously valuable. This is especially so if one also tries to act on these often hard-won values with integrity,

honesty and trust in the world, that eventually good will prevail.

I hope the beginning of your new term will not be too pressurised and I look forward to seeing you next Thursday 22nd April, at one...

The critical moment which Sarah evoked in me by her challenge seems to have led to a greater openness and creativity between us, a greater frequency of correspondence and a clearer focus on her part into structuring her emergent understandings. These seem to me to be focusing on student-centredness, standards of judgement and future actions.

We had two conversations on 22.4.93. and 28.4.93. in which we started to consolidate the concerns of student-centredness, standards of judgement and future actions in our talk about Hugh's learning.

ML Did you get my letter then?

SD Yeah. I read it again before I came to see you just now. I've had the chance to think again over the holidays. As I said in my letter, I do have to come to that point. To that next question. I meant the first one was, 'how can I help him engage in the module?' and it seemed to me that the answer to that question was, after reading Brandes and Ginnis... 'how can I create an atmosphere in which he can help himself much more'? Rather than me saying, 'Hugh, this is the sort of thing you need to read'... Rather than me putting in loads of stuff, me actually creating an atmosphere for him and hopefully others, will be able to do that. And I think in a way I haven't actually been addressing that enough. One child. That's what it often is about, isn't it? Focusing on one child... On the Hugh front, it

seems very basic to me, what I've achieved, it's not, 'well I want to do that now.' I think it's quite low-level, really. I haven't got all my evidence together yet but his behaviour has certainly improved. I've got a completely different relationship with him just by having a conversation with him on a taped conversation...I haven't got his completed leaflet yet, but he has written quite a lot and he's working in a garage in his spare time, and he's writing a letter and various other things. Things have happened.

ML What's low-key about that? Sounds pretty good to me.

SD Does it? I think it sounds very mundane...

ML Oh no! Maybe another good thing about action research is it enables you, the teacher, to deal more consciously with Hugh, and the result of that good teaching is surely to enable pupils like Hugh to lead better lives. That seems pretty miraculous to me. Isn't that what you're doing? Enabling Hugh to lead a better life?...

SD O.K. then, I see what you mean. So it comes down again to 'how can I create this better atmosphere for him to lead this better life?'

ML Exactly... Where's the ordinariness in that? And you have been surely, in your role as a teacher, as a human being, warmed by the interactions between you and Hugh?

SD Oh yes, of course.

Then on 28.4.93. we deepened our ideas about the values we were holding into the beginnings of an understanding about what such values look like in action for others, as we try to educate them.:

SD (showing me some of Hugh's work) Although this is not top-class work, I think you can see that there is a bit of a difference. Quite vague

really. What can be done about it? Here he has stipulated stuff. So there is a better feel to it. He has also written to an oil company off his own bat.. and he went to a couple of garages. And this was my suggestion.

ML And writing the letter...?

SD Was his own idea.

ML Has he a copy of that?

SD I doubt it. So that's really worked. There will be an evaluation of the work.

ML When you say an evaluation, by whom?

SD By him.

ML Oh good!

SD He also did a learning log which he hasn't filled in for a while, which is here, which is about answering a question on the worksheet.

ML When he says, 'I need to work on my writing,' I like that.

SD Yes, he does seem to know what he needs to do.

ML It's an evaluation with an intention, which is good.

SD Mm. 'I like working in pairs,' isn't the same. Then I asked him to work on his green stuff. He said he wanted to work 'at his own pace'. Good evaluation came out of that. The sixth former wrote something about how he did as well.

ML Oh that's lovely. You are beginning to get some evidence of pupil learning, I think, Sarah...So you're going to have an evaluation from him, have you had any taped conversation with him?

SD I hoped to do another yesterday but there wasn't time. I have had one in which I asked him some questions. From that discussion on the 30th, or whenever, from that point he changed his behaviour.

ML That's really lovely because there is a qualitative difference between those comments there and the later ones.

SD I was thinking that this 'at his own pace' is the really important point.

ML Yes it is.

SD Constructive.

ML That is much better than what he had before, isn't it? I like this, I like that. I think there is a difference.

SD Not enormous, but it's there.

ML You need to bring that out. The question I need to ask really, is, what do you think that Hugh has learnt? What claim are you going to be making about his learning? If you are bringing this as evidence, what is it evidence of?

SD Um, I think one of the things, a symptom perhaps. His behaviour has improved certainly.

ML O.K. Can other people corroborate that?

SD Yes, the sixth former, the librarian and so on. John will comment as well. So certainly that. Looking at his work here, I think that it's by no means wonderful work...

ML But he's not to be compared to other children, - but only to himself. Has he improved? Learnt something?

SD Compared with himself I think this work is better, more focussed, I think he's learnt a little bit about how to get on with things. He was on his feet a lot of the time before and now last lesson I noted down that he sat down and worked... As I go through my lesson-evaluations, there're gradually no comments about him at all. Comments on other children. Interesting really.

ML That is an interesting way of doing it... I would like to see, if you have another conversation with him that somehow you ask him what he thinks he's learnt. About the significance of what he's learnt. To get round to that kind of idea with him.

SD Yes. When he did this, he brought this back, and he wrote: 'this book is about...' He thought he had finished. It has a contents page, and that was it. This really had to go back to him and he had to be more structured. I wouldn't let him away with that. He had to learn to give it more structure. I hope that there would be something more about the meaning of what he was doing. That he would go back and redraft. He's in a group that hates redrafting. He has to see that you have to go into things a bit deeper.

ML ...I think you can also see evidence in [a child's] understanding of the learning itself and of the learning process.

SD Yeah, I agree with that.

ML And the way that Hugh has done here, where a pupil actually starts to suggest alternatives. You have a pupil there who is not fitting completely into your parameters but is actually trying to create his own. However in a tiny way. It is still more than he appeared to be doing at the beginning. He was always reacting in your parameters. Now he is making a constructive suggestion about what should happen. If you take that as a statement of empowerment, then empowerment itself is one of the key-factors in learning...

SD Yes, that's true. You're saying that if he is actually feeling that he is a bit responsible for it, then he has some idea of what he's doing.

ML That's very important and the evidence you've got here works on lots of different layers. It is not just that you can show a thematic better understanding, but I think you have hints here of Hugh, of a kind of learning that Hugh has to have before the other kind can really take place...

SD Yes, I think so. There is a need to strengthen this and perhaps we need to think of questions to ask him. To think about the detail.

ML Yes, I agree.

SD It is difficult to know what to ask him. Difficult to pitch it right.

ML Absolutely crucial. Do you want to thrash out some things here?

SD Well I've thought of some things...

III) The Writing-Up: a Question of Synthesis.

After our conversations and letters, it was now clear that the time had come for Sarah to start sorting out for herself what it was she understood and to weave the threads into her own account. She wrote:

...I've started work on writing up my report but, as usual, I haven't proceeded as fast as I would have hoped. I've got a good idea now of what I want to say and I think it would be useful if I spent Thursday afternoon working on a first draft...

I was writing to the group in an attempt to bring together some of the points that were occurring in tutoring sessions with individual students. It is significant, in terms of the general themes that were emerging with most of the students, that I could write to all of them in a way which was also wholly relevant to the conversations and correspondence that Sarah and I had experienced:

5.5.93.

...I thought I would write to you to clarify some of the things that we were talking about at the Validation meeting last Thursday. I have listened to the tape, and have to say that I really feel that there is a spirit of understanding about what constitutes valid action research work going

on now... It seems to me, from listening to the tape, however, that there is still some uncertainty and insecurity about what constitutes validity in terms of the evidence of pupil learning. I thought I would write a little about that, and then if there's anything you don't understand, you can get back to me when you need to.

What does evidence of pupil learning look like? First read my Guide on that section. (It saves me repeating it!) To answer that you need to think carefully about how you can see pupil learning in the first place let alone prove it's happened. So what do you look for? Well, documentary evidence for a start, of course. Homework, coursework, notes, journal entries etc. Over time. You can't do it in isolated pockets, little vacuums with no relationship to the whole development. That's going to be curricular learning, and after all you have been put into your schools to assist with learning in a particular curricular area...

All right.., what else can you do? ..What other type of learning can you show has probably happened? This brings us to the whole area of the pupils learning about how they learn. Can you show that you have started to inaugurate with the pupils, processes which have helped them to understand anything about how they learn? Have you started journals? Are you holding yourself accountable to your pupils in any way for the work that you are doing with them? Do they have any power of evaluation, in other words? Or do you hold all the power? Learning is something as well to do with power. Who has the right to say what is learning and what is not in your classrooms? If you asking yourself this question in any form, and trying to act on this way of thinking and it appears to be having an effect on your pupils, then you are doing

something about showing how learning is taking place. If issues of autonomy and responsibility for learning are themselves informing the way that you are acting in the classroom, then you will somewhere in your notes, your tape-recordings, lesson evaluations, pupil comments, journals etc., have some proof of the development of thinking amongst you and your pupils.

And now I want to talk a little about the significance of pupils speaking for themselves...Much of the work in emancipatory action research is to do with finding ways to enable those with less power to become their own spokespeople. Instead of being talked about, written about, spoken for (however laudable the motives may appear), the processes which we have to go through in order to enable that to be minimised, effect enormous learning...Isn't it the case, that when you understand what is happening to the extent that you can say, 'but this is different for me. I don't learn in that way,' or 'yes, that's how I want to do it because...' that you can truly say as well that you understand what is happening in a very valuable way? Think of your own learning. How do you learn? How do you know that? What does answering questions like that enable you to do in the future? I will cite something which was said in the second validation meeting: 'I don't think this was a student-centred session.' After the initial gulp I was really encouraged that notions about student-centredness were being formed in order to be able to make such a statement. If you can subsequently be held publicly accountable for your own notions (if this is what you are trying to do in the first place) about what student-centredness is all about for example, then you are building your own learning and becoming responsible for that learning. You are therefore speaking in your own voice. Not mine. The voice of experience

as it makes sense of experience!

*A couple of you have come to me recently and said, "I think I know this now," (whatever it may be, a recognition of the significance of something, or that people really do learn when they are motivated, for example) "but it seems so little after all this effort." My response was, if I remember correctly, that it not a little thing at all. It is **your** learning. So deeply significant for the ways in which you can teach from now on. And that in your report such comments, when substantiated by triangulation of one sort or another, are evidence of you speaking for yourself, 'owning' your own learning, becoming accountable for that learning as well.*

To give you some tips on that area of speaking for oneself. What does it look like? Well, it has something to do with the pupils being able to say 'no'. Not for the sake of it, but being able to contradict because they have been enabled to understand how it is that they learn. So if you were able to show that you had taken their comments on board and had changed your own agenda because of theirs, then you really have cracked it. Your pupils are speaking for themselves because you and they have entered the cycle of a) you setting up atmosphere in which they can ask questions, trying to find out, etc. (about whatever it is), b) they asking questions about you and the situations, of each other and themselves, c) you setting up with them, new situations. That is a learning cycle. If you can show us any of this happening, even in larval form, then you're really getting there and you do not need to fear that your accounts will not be judged as of a pass standard.

...Think about what you have done with your pupils, what situations you

and they have set up, what has come out of it all. You should now be doing more than thinking about writing up. As you start the difficult process of trying to sift through all the material that you are bound to have at this stage and writing about it selectively but informatively, try to answer the following questions:

- a) How can I shape this account of my educational development in a way that is true to the processes through which I perceive that my learning has occurred?*
- b) How can I ensure that in some significant ways, my pupils (or a single pupil) are speaking for themselves in my report? (see above)*
- c) What are the standards of judgement you are using to validate your account? Apart from these two?*

...I would like to leave you with this quotation from Zac's Special Study (1991) in which the title is so apposite for an action enquiry report, and in which I believe he is truly speaking for himself. Not for me. Not for accreditation, but for his own sense of the worthwhileness and reality to him and others of what he has learnt:

'In adopting the role of teacher I am contradicting my values...therefore if it were not for the concept of 'teacher' in the question I could ensure my values in education as stated in this same question. The role of facilitator offers me the only chance I have to uphold my educational values in practice.' (p.28)

The Final Report.

I will now reveal substantial extracts from Sarah's final report. I have tried to ensure that I do not prevent her voice coming through authentically in

a way she would recognise as a fair representation of her own struggle throughout her enquiry to evolve and enhance her own meanings and to enable Hugh (her pupil) to do the same for himself. I have interspersed the text with short extracts (in bold) of a conversation Sarah and I had on 17.5.93. specifically to help her in the drafting process. I had this one major opportunity to be influential in her writing up period. The comments in bold refer to aspects of the draft as it was on 17.5.93. and my attempts to help Sarah realise the epistemological potential of her own educational narrative: there appeared to me to be gaps in her text as it then stood and these centred on Hugh's voice coming through clearly and her realisation of the significance of what she had achieved. The rest of the text in this section is taken directly from Sarah's final draft, the one she handed in to me as her assessor, and the one which, in her Viva with an external examiner, was classed as being of 'astonishingly high quality.'

SD I've got all these threads, flashing backwards and forwards...I keep getting muddled up with my tenses. You're looking back and then you suddenly think something now as you're writing it. It's a constant moving across the time-scale about what you're knowing. You think, 'What did I know then?' I had that insight then and I've refined it to this now... ('Drafting' conversation 17.5.93.)

How can I help Hugh engage with the Green Issues part of the Green Module? by Sarah Darlington, Bath University, Spring - Summer, 1993.

Introduction.

During the course of this action research report, I want to record two strands of the action research process which run together. The first

describes my own development as a teacher and my growing understanding of differentiation - what it means and how I can implement it in my classroom. I hope that it will encompass my growing awareness of treating students as individuals, identifying their individual needs and then trying to meet them. Part of the action research cycle which was very important to me was my own professional development and a growing awareness and understanding of my educational values.

The other strand describes Hugh's progress and the ways in which I think I was able to help him to develop his learning. This will include how I got to know him better, how his behaviour changed and how he began to work more seriously in class resulting in higher levels of attainment. It will also show how Hugh began to take more responsibility for his own learning. It takes into account the observations of Hugh himself and other people involved in this aspect of my teaching practice...

Why Differentiation?

I had already considered differentiation as a possible area in which to conduct my research. Teaching mixed ability classes was part of my learning agenda for the first TP (teaching practice), but I never really got there. I was too busy dealing with my new role, with classroom management and with all the other slings and arrows of a first teaching practice. Differentiation - for which a good definition is *'ensuring that all pupils, regardless of ability, can achieve to the maximum of their potential in all areas of the formal and informal curriculum.'* (Hucker, 1990) - is part of good teaching. Every class one encounters, even at S Level, is a mixed ability group. And not just mixed ability. As Justine Hocking observes in her report, there is:

'also a case for differentiating according to attitude. Or...differentiating according to personality.' (Hocking, 1992)

The platitude that we - and our students - are all individuals has become increasingly evident to me over the last ten weeks. So, as I see it, differentiation is about helping individuals to achieve their own potential. A pretty tall order.

At this early stage a question that was forming in my mind was 'How can I differentiate in my mixed ability year Eight class?' I was really unsure about this. At the mention of the word 'differentiation' my mind filled up with endless worksheets, matrices and other forms of methodology. The question lacked clarity and focus and the answer to it was too enormous to contemplate in the context of a ten week teaching practice.

When I discussed my timetable with the Head of Department, it became clear that the Year Eight group I was to be teaching would indeed be a suitable group with which to work. He described the group as a 'difficult Year Eight, a suitable challenge for a second teaching practice'. The class is not popular with staff. The mixed ability group of 26 children includes six with special needs, some bright disruptive boys and a group of intelligent hard-working girls. The range of ability is wide and the first thing that I did was to make a chart of the NC levels achieved so far and the results of the CATs tests...

From observing lessons I gradually moved into getting more involved with the class who were finishing a module on the history of the

language. They didn't seem to be enjoying this much and were noisy and easily distracted, despite the firm line taken by the Head of Department...I had been given a short play to do with 8C and some library research designed to help implement NC programmes of study. The module we were to work with was called the Green Module...I started off with the play with the intention of working in the Library after Easter. I began the play and the Green Module in general with a press conference. I decided on this as a beginning because I sensed the class was easily bored and that a fresh way of approaching a book might appeal to them. I also wanted them to be aware of the green theme early on so they would be prepared when they started their library research...

Section Two: Getting started.

...Moirra came to watch me teach on 12.3.93., the day after the first action research validation meeting. She came in to watch a small Year 12 GCSE research group which I was coaching for the resit of their oral. Afterwards she pointed out to me that communicating to individuals as individuals, and trying to find out their individual needs, is differentiation. At the time I wrote:

'This was an important revelation to me - I hadn't thought of this as differentiation before. (my diary, 14.3.93)

During the de-brief, we talked about individuals and their needs. In my journal I wrote:

Classes are made of individuals - develop good relationships with individuals and you will have a good relationship with the class.

(Moir, my journal, 12.3.93.)

The reason why this was so important to me was because this was something I was already doing. I *was* differentiating after all! and something to which I personally attach a lot of importance...

Section Three: A move towards a more educational question.

I was beginning to feel that I needed to make a more formal and definite commitment to action research. I was working within a loose framework, but the process was still woolly in my mind. I was worrying about concepts like formulating a question, a critical friend, imagining solutions. It all seemed a bit daunting and I was worried that I wasn't doing it right. What I needed, in actual fact, was the helping hand of an educator to lead me along the pathway. I wouldn't have put it in those terms at the time. Part of my learning process has been to recognise the role of the educator - I won't say I've learned to put it into practice, but I'm working on it. I know this seems to be a digression, but it's all part of my learning about differentiation. It stemmed from that discussion I had with Moira on 12.3.93. Very gently she put it to me that although I had helped the students to build their confidence in oral work, I needed to develop their learning too. I remember her saying that we have a role as educators; not as counsellors, youth workers, or childminders, but as educators. It is our responsibility to educate the students in our care. Again it's one of those glaring platitudes, but I was only just beginning to see it, only just beginning to draw that particular thread out of this huge closely-woven web which is teaching and look at it on its own. There is a strong link with differentiation. Differentiation is helping individuals to achieve their potential and to do this, we have to educate them.

To return to the quest for the question, I went to our first validation meeting on 11.3.93. Listening to the talk in progress I realised that it was not necessary or even appropriate to focus my research on the whole of 8C. I could pick out one or two individuals...During a meeting with Moira (18.3.93) we said:

S Yes, that's too huge. How could I do that in four weeks?

M Yes, so how could you phrase a question that is going to show that your educational development has improved the learning of at least one pupil?

We discussed the question to and fro eventually coming up with a question which was much more focused and which I felt I could actually do in the timescale. The question now looked like this:

'How can I help X become engaged with the part of the Green module outlined in the Green Issues study guide?'

It seemed important to focus on a specific English issue rather than a classroom management one...With Moira's help I had really narrowed down my research to focus on to a tiny area of the mosaic of my teaching practice. On the one hand I felt a feeling of relief that the question was one that I could actually tackle in the context of the teaching practice. On the other hand, looking back, I see that this narrow focusing on a tiny area is part of the way action research works. Jean McNiff advises us to:

'Start small. Even though the project itself may not be small. The study

itself should focus in the initial stages on aspects rather than the whole...Action Research is sequential and cumulative. Each step will act as a springboard to the next.' (McNiff, 1988)

SD I suppose I am playing it down a bit, what I've learnt. It seems so basic really. I mean I think it's just my job what I do, and how I develop.

ML But there are certain things you know now, Sarah. Through working on your enquiry you have started to evolve your own knowledge. You are taking charge of your own development. (Conversation, 17.5.93)

...I had been thinking about how can I differentiate? so much that I was beginning to think that I would never get the real action research on the road. I could only see half of the action research whole. It was quite a surprise when it dawned on me that my development was relevant to the research too. Moira talked about action research involving student learning and professional development. It wasn't just Hugh and 8C, it was what was happening to me, and I was changing fast. It seemed quite a self-indulgent luxury to be able to include my own development in a piece of university-based course work, but as Moira pointed out, *my* learning from this action research enquiry was what I would be taking into my career.

At this meeting Moira also posed a question which was to be one of her criteria in assessing action research reports. The question was:

'In an account of your own professional development, can you show that any pupil has learned anything of value and has taken any responsibility for that learning?'

To be honest, I was a bit gobsmacked - the word 'value' was the one which worried me. Whose value? To what end? I swept the question under the carpet for the time being and went back to school. But although I put the question away, it wouldn't stay there and it kept appearing like something out of a fairy story. It asked itself when I was teaching Year Ten and Year Twelve as well as when I was teaching Year Eight and I will address it in more depth when I am closer to the end of this paper...

A closer look at Hugh

In July 1992, David, who had been teaching 7C as they were then, compiled a brief description of the class...Of Hugh he commented, *'weak and emotional, cannot sustain concentration. Poor on instructions. Level 2.* By the time I had taken over 8C, Hugh's attainment levels were: AT 1 - 2/3, AT 2 - 1/2. AT 3 - 2/3, AT 4/5 - 3...

M.L There's nowhere yet in this draft where you actually are using Hugh's spoken words. You allude to a conversation you've had with him, but where are his words? Where is he speaking for himself? Where are we seeing him talking in your text as a way of learning? (Conversation, 17.5.93)

Taped conversation with Hugh 29.3.93.

The purpose of the taped interview was to ascertain from Hugh how he felt about learning, what he enjoyed doing and how he felt I could help him. Interestingly, the very act of interviewing him for my research seemed to change his behaviour in the classroom. I listened to the tape again a couple of days ago. Hugh's voice, normally loud and easily heard across the classroom, was almost inaudible. In response, my own voice

gets quieter and quieter and more and more gentle. It was an interesting contrast to the interviews I had with Moira, during which my voice is quite loud and business-like, and, I think, shows how hard I was trying to reach Hugh.

I started by asking Hugh what he liked doing best in English, which turned out to be writing. This is how the conversation continued:

SD What have you been enjoying about what we've been doing lately?

HL The play.

SD...What parts have you enjoyed best? Talking about it? Writing about it? Reading aloud?

HL All of it.

SD All of it. You liked the play? What about the Green Issues research?

HL I found it hard.

SD What are you finding hard about it?

HL The research.

SD Because you can't think of anything?

HL No, it's hard to find.

SD So how do you think we should sort that out?

Do you think you should change or do you think there might be a way of finding more information? Do you need some help?

HL I need some help to make it better.

In this extract, Hugh pinpoints the weakness in his words very quickly - it's the research which is the problem, specifically the lack of materials. A couple of minutes later I asked him:

SD Once you've got the information, do you think it's going to be easy to do the leaflet or not?

HL It depends on the information....

...Part Two

The Evidence

I would like to claim that during my second teaching practice, I helped Hugh to become engaged in his Library research and the making of his leaflet. I need to summarise first what I did with the class and with Hugh; I will then attempt to show why I feel I helped Hugh to become more engaged with the project.

Section One

What I did in a general way.

I had to support the whole class, bearing in mind the large number of weaker members. I researched differentiation and as a result introduced a number of techniques into the classroom from which the whole class benefited...

What I did for Hugh in particular:

* I took an interest in him particularly - this in itself was the key, I think...He is a child who demands attention, even adverse attention. I think by recognising him as a person, a special person I had asked to help me with my research, Hugh grew an inch or two in his own eyes. On a couple of occasions he asked me about the research in front of other members of the class, so that they would know I had picked him to work with.

* I responded to his cry for individual attention and made sure that I knew at all times how he was getting on, and making sure he knew that I knew.

Hilary also spent some time with him working on setting out a leaflet.

* I found some material at home on unleaded petrol (his research was into cars and pollution) and gave it to him. This material included an address to write to for more information.

* I gave praise and encouragement wherever I could.

* I conducted two taped interviews with Hugh, one at the beginning of the research 29.3.93. and one towards the end 6.5.93.

Section Two - The results

Criteria for Success

When I had formulated my question the criteria for success which I had imagined were some sort of noticeable improvement in Hugh's English and a change in behaviour. In my diary I had also written *'I think the criteria for success are going to be in an improvement in effort and in him actually finding something to research.'* (1.4.93)

During our first taped conversation, I had asked Hugh what he felt was required to make his leaflet really good. He thought that he needed to work on the research side of it and he needed to find enough material.

Hugh's work

M.L You've got Hugh writing his introduction here...and he writes about different grades of petrol etc. It's quite factual, it's what you might expect

from Year Eight...You've got the word engage in your question...You've got the evidence here, but you're just not bringing it out. Where is your analysis of his progress? It's all here, I think. Look at the way his vocabulary changes when he writes about something he seems to care about. As an English graduate you must be well aware of the practical criticism techniques for analysing poetry. I think you can apply the same techniques to Hugh's work and come up with some very firm claims that he has improved. (Conversation, 17.5.93)

The First Draft

The first draft shows no sign of any research at all. The tone is conversational:

'Introduction

We all know cars destroy the air and we all know what we can do to prevent this happening at all. This Book tells you what car fumes can do to us older ones and young ones more I hope you enjoy this Book.

(19.3.93)

As can be seen by this introduction, Hugh is not relaying any information at all, just filling space. I had asked them to prepare questions before starting their library research. Hugh used my example questions and answered them in a very shallow way. For example in the section, 'what is the problem?' Hugh had answered with one sentence:

'The problem is that car are destroying the air and peoples lives are built around the car and it's not good for us and the ozon layer and petrol has got iron in it and the petrol stations are putting the

price of petrol up.'

The sentence is jumbled, his thinking skims the surface of an enormous topic and his information is anecdotal and irrelevant (for example the cost of petrol). The sort of language Hugh uses, particularly in the introduction, suggests role-play rather than his own voice. He says: 'This Book tells you', and 'I hope you enjoy this Book' as though he were playing at being a publisher or blurb writer. It shows that he is not taking the work seriously.

The Second Draft

The next draft was completed over a couple more Library lessons and the Easter holidays. We had one taped conversation which I talked about in detail earlier. In the new draft I would like to claim that Hugh was much more engaged with what he was doing....For example, compare his section on the ozone layer with the passage quoted above on the 'problem'.

Ozone Layer

If we do not do anything about the car fumes we will destroy the ozone layer and then we will have the green house effects and we don't want that do we. and when we lie in the sun and we didn't have the ozone layer we would burn and the earth would get hot and the air would be not good for us to breath in so we could or we might die so we better do something about this before it's to late so use unleaded petrol or do the following (a list of alternatives to driving). (1.4.93.)

In the earlier draft, Hugh had recommended a list of alternatives to the car but without either the fervour or the facts which he employs here. Twice

he refers to the need for us to do something about the depletion of the ozone layer; he gives two warnings of the consequences if we don't. The passage shows evidence of research which the first piece did not. For example, he explains the 'greenhouse' effect and that it can have two results, burning and impurity in the air. The language he uses is more emotive: 'we might die' and 'we better do something about this before it's too late'. I feel this passage shows great signs of greater engagement with the research - he now has some facts - and greater engagement with the issues. He does seem to care more and is less distracted by playing at writing a book...

M.L. It's almost as if you're saying, 'well, I've got all this evidence, I can stick it in the Appendices and the reader can do the rest...

S.D. So all I really need to do is use this evidence more effectively. (17.5.93)

The final draft

...[This] is divided into eight sections which include: 'what is the problem? What can be done about it? What can it do to us? Lead; Ozone layer; Electric cars; Oil and a bibliography. It is longer than the earlier drafts...The quality of the work is less easy to define and I think it lies in two areas - the content and the language used to describe it. The content reflects Hugh's wider research. For example the section on lead, which I mentioned above, contains figures as well as facts...In the final draft, Hugh still includes his comments and opinions and to a certain extent he is still role-playing the author. He is, however, much more aware of a wider body of opinion and shows a greater degree of commitment to the issue...

Throughout the final draft the language generally has a more formal feel

to it and displays a wider vocabulary. For example, in the section on the ozone layer which appeared in the second draft, Hugh uses the word 'breath' (breathe); in the final draft he uses inhale (inhale). This sort of detail shows a growing ability to redraft by himself and the commitment to do it. By using more formal style for the final draft, Hugh also shows a move towards knowledge of the difference between written and spoken language. Both these things, which are incidentally, strands of AT3 (writing) in the English National Curriculum, show a greatly increased degree of engagement as well as an improved quality of work...

ML So where is Hugh speaking with his own voice?

SD Come off it!...I've quoted from him.

ML Is quoting from someone the same as having them speak with their own voice?

SD But I show what use I've made of that as well.

ML Yes, to a certain extent. But I wonder whether the significance of what you've done comes out in the writing so far. And what use has Hugh made of it all? (Conversation, 17.5.93)

Section Four - Hugh's views.

Taped conversations

During our taped conversations, Hugh seemed a bit overawed and spoke very quietly. Unfortunately this leads to me leading the conversation and him replying briefly to my questions...During our second taped interview I was...concerned with ascertaining what had helped...I started off by asking Hugh how he felt he had improved:

SD I know where I think you've improved, what about you? Where do

you think you have improved?

HL In my research.

SD In your research...that was the area you were worried about...you were worried you weren't going to get enough books. Did you feel you did that in the end?

HL Yes.

SD What did you do for your research? I remember you said you were going to try a couple of garages.

HL I tried to, but they never had any leaflets.

For Hugh, the important area of improvement was in the research. Later in the conversation he mentioned writing to Esso which also seemed to have been important. He also commented that I had given him the address for Esso which had slipped my mind...Hugh also agreed that the taped conversation had altered his perception of me - but he didn't want to say how. He also agreed with my suggestion that he felt different because I had picked him to be interviewed, but again he was reluctant to elaborate. I think that his reluctance was due to the difficulty of expressing himself fluently in response to such direct questions...

ML But it seems to me that you have got evidence of someone who is beginning to speak for himself and say where he wants his learning to go. (I am referring here to the transcript material that Sarah had elicited from her time with Hugh but had not yet integrated into the text in a way that would do her insights and Hugh's emergent autonomy justice.) And I don't feel that you've highlighted that anywhere near sufficiently. (17.5.93)

His written evaluations

I set up a learning log for the whole class on 19.3.93. This is a transcript of Hugh's comments:

19.3.93. I have learnt how to plan something properly and what makes a good leaflet.

23.3.93. I have learnt nothing except how to read the script properly. I enjoyed answering questions. I need to work on my writing and my speaking. I like working in pairs and in a group...

30.3.93. I feel the teacher could help me by taking a few people out of the class and go with hillery do da (sic) in L12 and work at our own pace and she explains it more clearly....

...His evaluation of his final draft of his green issues leaflet

Hugh's evaluation of his final draft is in response to the evaluation section of the Green Issues study guide...

Hugh comments on the lack of material in the Library and mentions the letter he wrote to Esso:

'I have done my research very well when they was not enough information but I wrote to esso house asking for some info on cars and pollution and they sent me some leaflet I think that was good of them to send me some. I used my own words in some parts but not all. I made it look good by cutting out pictures and sticking them on.' (11.5.93)

S.D. It wasn't until I re-read his final evaluation that I realised that he was saying something really important for him. He was using his own words and I suddenly realised what that meant. It was a really great moment!

(17.5.93)

I have included Hugh's concern about his research in my 'criteria for success'. Until writing this report I had not really given much thought to Hugh's criteria for success but it was evidently important to him because he spontaneously included it in his evaluation. I think that the fact that Hugh wrote to Esso at all, and that he mentions it in his evaluation shows that he was taking some responsibility for his own learning.

He makes an honest answer to the second question saying that he used his own words in 'some parts but not all' and he says he made 'the leaflet look good by cutting out pictures and sticking them in.'

In this evaluation...he uses his own words which I think is significant - it shows a sense of ownership. He was obviously proud of his work because he asked me about it three times if he could take it home to ask his mum!

Section Five - Summing up

Conclusion

...A return to the question: 'In an account of your own educational development, can you show that any pupil has learned something of value and has taken any responsibility for that learning?'

I feel that I have demonstrated fully in the preceding pages that Hugh did take responsibility for his own learning. But did he learn anything of *value* ? First I needed to ask, whose value? Unfortunately, due to my inexperience, I neglected to ask Hugh directly if he had learnt anything of value. That was a pity because I think he might have given me an

answer...I did ask him where he saw improvement.

HL In research.

...I think it is quite possible that if I had asked Hugh what he had learnt of value, he might well have said that he learnt more about researching. If we consider my values then I think Hugh learned several things of value. He learned more about using English. In his final draft he shows that he is learning to revise and redraft, he is learning the difference between written language and speech and he is learning to write in appropriate language for the form. He also displays research skills and a greater commitment to the issue he chose to work on.

He became more responsible for his own learning my writing to Esso and in the way he worked on his final leaflet. He became more autonomous and independent; he made the decision to write to Esso and to choose the material he did for his final draft. His behaviour also improved (*evidence was earlier provided from the Head of Department, a sixth former and the Librarian*) which could be taken as an indication of greater autonomy and self-control. He became more self-confident and I think this is shown in the improved quality of his work...Perhaps more importantly, he learned that he could be successful...

Finally in asking the question 'whose value?' I feel I should include the implied value of the National Curriculum Council...

ML I just feel that if you give me in the account now, it's not living up to its potential. Where's the overview? (17.5.93)

A final summing up of my action research enquiry

I started off this report by saying that I wanted to write about how my views on differentiation have evolved over the last ten weeks and how I have become aware of my own professional development. I feel that I have developed a rationale now which underpins my teaching and I hope I have explored some of that in the preceding pages. Through action research I have had the opportunity to focus on and explore my values in a way which I would not otherwise have done and I feel that I will be entering the teaching profession as a more fully developed individual than might have otherwise been the case...Working on differentiation has led to my professional development, which in turn has led to better differentiation in the classroom...

'Every line of your paper speaks its values but not explicitly. I think one of the things you are trying to do is make the explicit from the implicit - of all the things you've left out, that [my educational values] to me seems to be the greatest shame...because it would lend so much more validity...and it would enable the reader to understand your values.'

(conversation with Moira, 17.5.93)

This was true. During the past ten weeks I have given great consideration to my own professional development and I have referred to it in this report but I haven't really spelled out what my values as an educator are. So here, for what they're worth, are my educational values...The following are not in any particular order and, inevitably, there is a fair amount of crossover. Returning to the subject of accountability, these are the areas in which I would be prepared to be held to account in my future

career - my 'standards of judgement' as Moira puts it:

1) I want to provide a learning environment which allows the student to take the risk required to learn. Learning is a risky business and as a teacher I want my learners to feel confident that they will not be exposed. Guy Claxton (1988) says:

'Every moment is fraught with the danger of being exposed, yet again as incompetent. And this in its turn threatens to bring the public humiliation that we would do almost anything to avoid.'

2) I want to make the curriculum available to all 'ensuring that all pupils, regardless of ability can achieve to the maximum of their potential in all areas of the formal and informal curriculum'. (Hucker, 1990)

3) I believe each student is an individual and to teach that individual first I need to 'reach' her. (*Before I can teach you I must first reach you* - poem quoted by Justine Hocking, 1992). Peter Bell and Trevor Kerry say - 'make good relationships with children individually.' I was particularly struck by the way Moira put it:

'Classes are made of individuals. Develop good relationships with individuals and you will have a good relationship with the class.'

(12.3.93)

I commented in my diary (7.4.93):

'How can I differentiate? Is it by acknowledging everyone's

individuality?’

4) I believe that part of my duty as an educator is to develop the autonomy of the individual; in Guy Claxton’s words: ‘teaching is an activity in which the goal is to make the teacher redundant’ (Claxton, 1988). The progress to this goal is gradual. I commented in my diary, of Laura:

‘She needs to pick up the reins of responsibility gradually.’

I try to develop autonomy by involving students in the planning of their work, in giving them responsibility and allowing them varying degrees of control.

‘One of the goals of student-centred education is to enable people to make their own choices...Change does not happen overnight.’ (Brandes and Ginnis)

5) I want to be myself and to be honest. Donna Brandes says:

‘Teachers who are confident enough to be themselves in the classroom, and not pretend to be anything else, who treat students like fellow human beings, who are clear, precise and honest in sharing their perception of the truth at any given moment, these teachers are likely to achieve warm and trusting relationships in their school life.’

(Brandes and Ginnis, 1980).

6) I recognise that first and foremost I am an educator; it is my responsibility to develop the learning of individuals. I am not a counsellor or a child minder! This was pointed out to me by Moira...

*'I know you are trying to encourage, but you also have to educate them.
The question is, how can you encourage pupils lacking in self-
confidence whilst at the same time challenging them educationally?'*

(12.3.93)

Looking back over this list, I realise that I have given myself a lot to live up to...Earlier in this report I described teaching as a mosaic and a web. Lee Shulman (1992) refers to a landscape that has its own syntax. The word that comes into my mind now is 'pattern' and I would include learning as well as teaching. I really do feel that for me now, the pattern has some sense. It has an underlying meaning. I know now, at this moment, why I want this colour here and that texture there; I know why and how I want to teach - I have a framework. I have lived out this framework of values to varying degrees during my teaching practice, I know it to be good as far as it goes. But in my ending to return to my beginning, I realise that the detail of the pattern is movement. Things change and develop, and so, I hope, will I. As Jean McNiff says...'There is no such thing as action research, only action researchers'.

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25.5.93. *Dear Moira,*

You asked me to write an evaluation of my action research report. As you no doubt sensed when you asked me, I was quite reluctant to do this. Why? Well to start with, it is a very personal piece of writing and my instincts told me to give it to you to mark and then shove it in a drawer and never look at it again. You are the only person to have read it; not even Mansur, who usually edits my work, has read it. It's a personal piece of work in two senses: first it describes my development and second it's probably the longest piece of writing I've ever done and it's my creation. When I wrote stories at school, I never wanted anyone else to read them...I think I'm worried about it not being good enough, that people might read it and think, 'God. this is awful!' Until this weekend, I was seriously worried about having my case-study in the AR collection; going public was a very real concern, perhaps the most difficult part of the whole process. When I realised that by the time it gets into the Resources

room, I won't be at the University any more, I felt slightly less worried. At least people won't know it's me!

When you asked me to evaluate my report, I felt that the evidence for showing that I had made any impact on Hugh's learning was quite weak and it did seem that all those words were rather self-indulgent. Over the weekend, however, I analysed Hugh's final draft and I found that there were some quite important improvements. I began to feel that I really had helped him engage with the module and that there was clear evidence there to prove it. I also answered your question, 'In an account of your professional development, can you show that a learner has learnt something of value...?' After analysing that last draft and writing the answer to the question, I really felt I could show that a learner had learned something of value and I can tell you, I grew about two inches! I now feel quite proud of my action research report and because I think it's good enough, I'm not bothered about who reads it. I think it stands up on its own now, it doesn't need protecting from the big, wide world.

I also started to feel better about it when I thought about the work that went into it. I looked at it when it was finished and I thought, 'How did I do that?' It really is a mammoth achievement, especially given the context. (N.B. Sarah, like the other students, had precisely five days after coming off teaching practice and a primary school week which followed, in which to complete the assignment.) I worked hard on it and I think it's a good piece of work. It is also now a much more balanced piece of writing. My first draft was all about me 'interacting with myself' as you put it. The final draft is more equally weighted between the two learners, Hugh and myself, which is as it should be.

That is not to say, however, that there is no room for improvement. If I had had more time, I would have liked to have made the link between the thinking and writing process (Chomsky and all that). There just wasn't time to do that properly. I feel I analysed Hugh's final draft adequately, but I could have done a more thorough job - included more examples. I think there is some clumsy use of language - I still don't like that introduction, it isn't really me - and I think the cover's a bit gross, but other than that - it's O.K..

I really would like to thank you properly for all your support and enthusiasm and your questions. You've helped me produce a much better piece of work than I would have done on my own. The validation meetings were really good, but it was the personal contact that made all the difference. You really made all the difference. Throughout the process, you've asked me to questions: you've shown me doors which I've made the decision to open or not and that has been crucial in my work and for me. To give you an example, having to focus specifically on the question that I mentioned above (I can't be bothered to write it out again!) made, I think, all the difference to my report and to the way I feel about it. So thank you!...

Epilogue to Part One.

My Aesthetics: A Question of Balance

**'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing -
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'**

The Epilogues in this thesis are new. I want to render my text more comprehensible. I want to communicate the links to be made between the four Parts which are unified in their concern to create my own living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989b; Evans, 1995; Hughes, 1996) from the description and explanation of my own educational development. I will use The General Prologue to the thesis as an analytical and evaluatory tool for the claims I am making.

In this Epilogue I would like to unpick the strands of Part One in a more explanatory way than I achieved in the original thesis. The aesthetic nature of my enquiry is the most problematic as I outlined in the Introduction. Aesthetic experience has been variously described as involving a matter of taste (Kivy, 1988), concerning itself with beauty, perception and the artistic (Diffey, 1986) and perceiving a meaningful congruity between form and content whose substance is worthy of serious engagement (Foshay, 1995). I see all the above as telling in my own educational enquiry but not exact enough as descriptors of my own aesthetic experiences. In addition, in terms of an explanation which I am required to do in a thesis which makes claims to knowledge, I am confronted not only with many different ways of looking at the aesthetic realm of experience - with a history of explanation that goes back to Kant and Shaftesbury - but that attempts I make at explaining the aesthetic are

in danger of destroying precisely the quality I am valuing. Explanation demands reasons and justification. Aesthetic experience and perception do not lend themselves easily to such formulations. However, Sibley (1965) says, and I agree with him, that seeking explanations for aesthetic experience may lead to a state in which:

'our appreciation is deepened and enriched...in being articulate.'

(p.146)

My first claim to educational knowledge - the development of an 'aesthetic morphology' of my educative relationships has educational use-value in judging the quality of my educational practice - relies for its vindication on the appreciation I have of those relationships, becoming deeper and enriched in being articulate. This claim assumes a use-value through just such a process of seeking explanations. Sibley's premise expresses the essence of my own initial intuition, that if I were able to access areas of my own understanding, then I would be capable of improving the quality of my educational practice. In the Introduction to this thesis I state that some of the educational validity of this text:

'is predicated upon the belief that bringing the power of reflection to my intuitions and actions will improve the educational quality of those actions.' (p. 23)

As an educator, this is the form of rationality to which I subscribe, and in the Epilogues I will be judging the ways in which I was able to improve my educative relationships using this form of rationality.

When I have an aesthetic experience, say with Bach's Matthew Passion, I am conscious of understanding something of the unity of purpose within each aspect of what it is I am listening to - the instrumentation, the voices, the words, the musical form of the section, the harmony and counterpoint - in a way which I find beautiful and moving, and which convinces me of the significance of the synthesis and the parts, both in themselves and to me. I also feel drawn into what I apprehend as if I am a part of its creation, and on a deeper level, if I am particularly receptive, simultaneously experiencing the 'objective' truth that I am a part of humanity as a whole, and the 'subjective' truth that humanity is beautiful and good. Making such connections is for me the key to any aesthetic experience, and gives rise to an awareness of my own human spirit. As Wood (1990) writes:

'the human being through its awareness of itself...transcends the merely natural to the level of the spiritual. 'Spirit' embraces not only 'subjective spirit' (individual psychology), but also 'objective spirit' (society or culture)' (p. 4).

In what I term as an aesthetic experience I connect with my own creativity, with my desire for unity and beauty within, and with a sense of not being alone in the universe. In an aesthetic moment I appear to myself as neither an individual nor as emergent into the whole, but both simultaneously. In Tillich's (1952) words I: *'transcend objectivity as well as subjectivity.'* (p. 34)

Tillich goes on to write about what it means to explain ontology (but I feel his comments work equally well for aesthetics here):

'In order to approach it cognitively one must use both [subjectivity and objectivity]. And one can do so because both are rooted in that which transcends them, in being-itself. It is in the light of this consideration that the ontological concepts must be referred to must be interpreted. They must be understood not literally but analogously.' (p.34/5)

I prefer to understand ontology as something which bridges the dialectic between subjectivity and objectivity, rather than Kearney's (1984) description of ontology as:

'the idealizing subjectivity...which reduces everything to itself.'

(p.31)

Touching my own ontology is always for me the result of an aesthetic experience. I am enabled momentarily to make a connection between myself as one human being and humanity as a whole. I have found this experience meaningful particularly as I have tried to describe and explain the significance of my own educational development. It is the working out in practice of the meaningful connections between myself and others which, in the name of education, has given rise to my own educational development and eventually to this thesis which is its theoretical explanation.

Recently, as The General Prologue shows, I have recognised the power of 'The Ancient Mariner' to help me in my educational practice by connecting me to what I find of value in my life. In a recent article about

Action Research in the nineties, Foshay (1996) says this:

'Moira Laidlaw...has found that her profound concern with the development of moral sensitivity among her 11 year old girls can be met through her approach to Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner'. Her records are most vivid in a diary she has kept.' (p.4)

When the Mariner explains:

*'Oh happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare.
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware,'*

he expands his consciousness. Their beauty enables him to reach beyond himself and access his capacity for love. Collinson (1992) writing about Diffey (1986) says this:

'There is a case for looking beyond art and beauty for the meaning of the aesthetic. For it speaks of an awakening and of that awakening as the source from which love arises.' (p. 174)

He goes on to say that in aesthetic experience:

'A new vision...and a deeper and finer feeling are involved.'
(p. 174)

It is largely through aesthetic experiences that I rediscover the motivation

to try harder in the name of education because I sense simultaneously the 'objective' truth that I am one of many, and the 'subjective' truth that we are all potentially good and the potential I have to realise something of value through that understanding. When I read the poem I am reminded of the meaningfulness of my own and others' existence in such a way that I feel more committed to enabling others to perceive something of the worthwhileness I feel about Life. I access my own capacity to love others and myself.

In this awakening that Collinson (1992) alludes to, perceptions are heightened and become more significant to the person awakened. Collinson argues that not only is the person awakened to new and special feelings of connectedness to what is being perceived, but what or who is being perceived seems also to be enhanced. This too, is my experience. In the General Prologue I wrote:

'The poem came alive and during the reading I was reminded, as is the Mariner, about the reality of others. The girls seemed to become more real to me. The poem enabled me to recognise them afresh as individuals. Because of the power of this poem, I could recognise, as if for the first time, the beauty and loveliness of the girls as they responded.' (p. 9)

In this sense, I find Kivy's (1990) comment relating to aesthetic perception illuminating, that we: *'tend to animate what we perceive'* (p.57). When I touch my own ontology through an aesthetic experience, say, through the reading of 'The Ancient Mariner', my perceptions expand in ways which make me more optimistic, and more concerned to reach others with this optimism.

This brings me to the ethical dimension of my aesthetic experiences. I do not wish at this juncture to go into theoretical explanations about the ethics of my practice but in order to be able to explain the educational significance of Part One, I need to point towards the ethical dimension for me of an aesthetic experience. (See the Epilogue to Part Two for a more detailed explanation of the ethical dimension to my educational practice.)

When the Ancient Mariner is awakened to love through perceiving beauty, he is motivated to act for the good. He blesses the water-snakes which he sees now not as 'slimy things' but as sublime aspects of the wholeness of Creation of which he too is a part. Instead of experiencing himself at the centre of the universe, through his awakening to love he wants to seek connections to others and he can at last perceive their reality and significance. He is also able to experience his responsibility to himself and others. When I say I love the girls I teach and 'The Ancient Mariner' poem, it is because both awaken me to seeking connections with others, as I perceive their reality and significance. In addition I too am able to experience my responsibility to myself and others. I do not perceive the love I feel for the poem and for the girls as qualitatively different. Both are awakened through aesthetic experience. In the General Prologue I wrote:

Each time I engage with the poem in this living way - in other words when it becomes part of the way I externalise my relationships with others as I did in the classroom this morning (and never so powerfully in my opinion) - then I find more and more in the poem and more and more in the children. I was really overcome by my love for them this morning and there doesn't seem such a distinction between my love for them and my love for the poem. They both derive from the same root. It is something to do with my own ontology and has something too of my own ethics. That is how they are

linked - in my practice with the girls as I try to help them improve the quality of learning. (p.9/10)

Through aesthetic experience - in the Mariner's case through the perception of the beauty of the water-snakes, and in mine through a profound identification with his development, and teaching the girls in the classroom - the emergent love we feel is not founded upon selfish interest, but motivates good actions for others through a greater understanding of our life's purposes and meaningfulness.

The aesthetic experience of seeing the beauty in the water snakes leads the Mariner to access his own ontology and through that movement within to discover the power to do good. He perceives, reaches in, discovers in himself good potential and moves out again to bring what he has understood into what he can do in the world. This process can happen to me too, either when I am reading the poem, for example, or teaching in the classroom. When I have an aesthetic experience and I am awakened in my perceptions, I not only touch my own ontology, perceiving myself as a part of the wholeness of Creation, but I am also motivated to do good. When I love the children I teach, it is both ontological and ethical. It is ontological because the love I feel enables me to perceive their individuality and their connections with others including myself. It is ethical because the love I feel for them inspires me to do my best for them, to help them in their learning both about the curricular subject, English, and about themselves and their place in the world so that we might all lead happier lives.

Aesthetic experience does not just open me to my own ontology and

ethics, but enables me as well to develop my own knowledge. This knowledge is one I value highly because it helps me to understand the world around me and to act towards the good in it. Thus for me to derive an explanation of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships seemed to be a sound premise upon which I could seek to improve the learning process with my students and pupils.

In addition to strive towards an explanation of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships, parallels what I understand to be part of the way in which the action planning process works (Whitehead, 1985). In Part One of the thesis I show what it meant to have a concern which was to improve the quality of my educative relationships. I had an imagined solution - developing an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships - in which I could focus on the dimensions within the relationships in order to understand them and improve their quality. I then began to help my students, in particular Sarah, to improve the quality of their learning and kept data on the process in order to see the way in which our educative relationships were developing. Then I observed what was happening, and with the help of the students, and action research colleagues, I evaluated and modified in the light of my findings.

Part One of the thesis was more ambitious than the explanation of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships, however. Written in the Summer of 1993, I attempted to reveal the links as I perceived them then, between the creation of my living educational theory and the use of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships to improve learning. It began to include an analysis of my own educational

development through the creation of my own educational standards of judgement. Although the premise of using the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships in a bid to improving them was a sound one, I did not understand the living nature of the connections between the various dimensions of my educational practice. Although I was concerned about the ethics and ontology of my practice and the resultant knowledge, I did not realise how important is the relationship between them. In this thesis I am creating my own living educational theory as I explained in The General Prologue:

'[It] lives in the values as they become explicit in my practice over time. It is therefore never complete. It is much more than a snapshot and much less than the truth, but it is living. As I draw together these words I draw together my past, I describe and explain the present and out of that I try to craft the future.' (p.25)

My own living educational theory emphasises the developmental nature of values (Laidlaw, 1996) in much the same way that others have also remarked upon (Whitehead, 1993b; Evans, 1995; Laidlaw and Whitehead, 1995; Mellett, Laidlaw & Whitehead, 1995). In these Epilogues I seek to capture something of the immanent dialectic of my educational practice through an emphasis on the connections to be made between the dimensions which constitute my own aesthetic experiences. I will go into detail in the Epilogue to Part Four about the connections to be made between the immanent dialectic at the heart of my educational practice and the creation of my own living educational theory.

Having looked at some of the attributes of my own aesthetic experiences, how do these relate to evolving an aesthetic standard of judgement by

which to judge this thesis, and more particularly, an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships? The most compelling aspect of an aesthetic experience for me when I apply it to my educative relationships, is the way in which it illuminates various aspects of my understanding and unifies them in a pleasing way. When I listen to Bach's 'Matthew Passion', or read 'The Ancient Mariner' with a group of children, I tap into the unity of purpose within my own life and educational processes. My aesthetic perceptions open me up to my ontology, ethics, and knowledge. Therefore evolving a dialectic between the aesthetics of my educative relationships and the emerging forms and structures (the morphology - see below for a more detailed explanation of the term 'morphology') enables me to focus on those aspects of the processes that are generative (McNiff, 1993). Reflecting on the ways in which the different aspects of my own aesthetic qualities interact and develop enables me to be alert to my own educational development, which I understand to be partially valid in the extent to which I am able to improve the quality of learning with my students and pupils.

In my original Ph.D. submission I do not believe I ever come close to a helpful definition of what I mean by 'morphology'. Suzanne Langer (1957) seems to use the term interchangeably with 'form'. For example she writes of music articulating:

'forms which which language cannot set forth'. (p.233)

but shortly after writes:

'what music can actually reflect is only the morphology of

feeling; and it may be that some sad and some happy conditions may have a similar morphology...music at its highest, though clearly a symbolic form, is an unconsummated symbol.' (p.238)

In commenting on Langer's theorising about the structure of music, Wilkinson (1992) writes that it has:

'a logical form or morphology or pattern,' (p.205)

as if there is no perceptible difference. In my original Ph.D. submission I assumed that not only were the forms which my educative relationships took self-explanatory, but that the terms used to describe them did not matter very much. Like many other aspects within my original thesis I did not see the communication of my insights to be as significant as the insights themselves and was not perceiving in my practice and its representation the link between form and meaning even though I stressed it in the original Introduction. However I will still defend the use of the term 'morphology' in my first claim to knowledge:

'1) The development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships has educational use-value in judging the quality of my educational practice.'

Morphology means more to me than mere form or structure. It has connotations of both. For example the forms in which my educative relationships manifest themselves are through formal and informal conversations and written correspondences. Sometimes the more formal conversations are audio or videotaped. Many of my educative

relationships, particularly in the more recent stages of my educational development, have been structured through the negotiated development of educational standards of judgement through which we can judge the quality of our work together. The word 'morphology' also has linguistic connotations in terms of the words used to structure ideas. Furthermore, the concept of 'morphology' is used in the biological sciences to denote the emergent form and structure of living organisms. This thesis wishes to stress the living aspects of my practice, hence my concern with such concepts as 'immanent dialectic' and 'living' dialectics' (see Introduction and Epilogue to Part Four), my own living educational theory (the whole thesis), and educational development. What I am also stressing in my first claim to knowledge is the dialectical nature of the interrelationship between the aesthetic areas of my educative relationships and their forms, structures, and living aspects.

I do not wish to accentuate the concept of 'morphology' in isolation from the notions of aesthetic which I bring to my educative relationships and this thesis. I bear in mind all the above as my understanding of what I am meaning in this thesis by 'morphology'. However, the following by Collinson (1992) is helpful here when considering the dialectical relationship between content and form:

'To perceive the aesthetic form of things is to experience the deeper reality of the world.' (p.148)

In other words, the dialectic between 'aesthetic' and 'form' can generate a more profound insight about the nature of reality. What I partly strive for in this thesis is a description and explanation of how I can best marry the

aesthetic dimensions of my educative relationships and their forms, structures and developmental aspects in a bid to improve the quality of learning and in the creation of my own educational knowledge. Indeed Carroll (1996) makes a point which I will take up specifically in the Epilogue to Part Two on the ethics of my practice:

'Failure to elicit the right moral response...is a failure in the design of the work, and, therefore, is an aesthetic failure.' (p.233)

In The General Prologue I am most concerned about how to promote moral learning with the girls I teach and my proposal to the 1997 American Educational Research Association in Chicago is entitled: 'Improving The Quality Of Our Moral Learning Through The Reading Of Poetry With A Group Of Year Seven Pupils' which will be based, if accepted, on the Ancient Mariner paper. I do believe that there is a dialectic between form and content which understanding can enhance. This, of course, is the basis of my claim that the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships has educational use-value in improving the quality of learning.

In the rest of this Epilogue to Part One of the thesis I am going to look at the quality of the dialectic between the forms, structures and developmental aspects of my educative relationships and their aesthetic dimensions. It is within the connections to be made between the dialectic that I judge the nature of improvements in my practice.

This brings me to why I should be concerned with an aesthetic standard of judgement in qualifying my educative relationships - in other words

aesthetic judgements brought to bear on human relationships as opposed to the more orthodox realms of art. I have always been motivated to find the beautiful, the worthwhile, the ethical and ontological in my educational life. I assume that my reaction to the first sighting of the Delaroche painting, which I described in the Prologue to Part One, was to do with the instant connections I was making between the values depicted within it and the personal experiences and values which I had always struggled with in my own life. The effort to rise above my own past by learning from it is something explicitly denied to Lady Jane Grey in the painting. However, the picture is for me so poignant because despite all the powers against her, she is still portrayed as beautiful, powerful, noble and good. Although she is in one sense defeated, her spirit shines out undaunted. Although she is in distress, frightened and abandoned, she is depicted as central, as sublime in her beauty.

I do not wish to subscribe to a causal view of my life, but I suspect that a desire to find the beautiful in my life derives, in part anyway, from its negation in my own formative years. My inclusion of certain aspects of my own autobiography in Part One was an attempt to show some of my own touchstones as I try to lead a full and productive life now. The experience of the rape, its resultant childlessness, and my brother's own inability to communicate with the world for many years, have all contributed consciously to my own sense of what it is worthwhile for me to pursue in my lifetime. Because I have lived through violations associated with the abuse of power and the ontological denial of having children, because I struggled over years with Alastair trying to reach him, and that awesome moment when I did, many of my concerns as an educator are bound up with helping individuals to express what is of value to them as they try to

improve the quality of what they are doing. My sense of the ontological and ethical dimensions of my life become real for me most significantly through human relationships. The significance of such insights is most readily comprehensible and emphasised for me through aesthetic experience. Therefore, in order to improve the quality of my educative relationships with my students and pupils, I need to be able to access my own aesthetic ways of knowing. Through aesthetic experiences I am alerted to the importance of making connections between my ethical and ontological concerns. It is also how I access my own potential as a loving, productive and significant human being.

When the Ancient Mariner is moved to bless the water snakes he has what I would term an aesthetic experience because he expands his own consciousness to include the reality of others in a way which motivates him to do good for them. It is that inspiration too I seek in my teaching, in my research, in this thesis and in my communication with you. That feeling of reaching out to another in ways which enhance both of our experience of life is for me the reason I am in education. It is the reason I wish to struggle to improve what I do as an educator and as a human being, because the rewards of so doing are generative. The more I understand about how to reach myself and others in order to improve the quality of our learning, the more I wish to do it. I reach this level of insight only through aesthetic experience. I cannot simply experience this form of truth once and know it for all time. I need to find it within relationships and experience it anew time after time. Aesthetic experience helps me to perceive the quality of what it is I am doing in the name of education. It helps to locate my practice, my reflections on my practice and my theorising about that practice. This is because it contains the living

values I use to give meaning and form to my educational life. Thus developing an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships is a rational extension of this search for a working dialectic between the forms and the values upon which I ground that practice in order to render it educational. This is because it focuses me on the living dialectic between the emergent forms and structures of my educative relationships and the values which give them purpose and meaning. I will write about the connections to be made between the aesthetics of my educational practice and my own living educational theory in the Epilogue to Part Four of this thesis.

I would now like to review some of the aspects of Part One in the light of my new understanding as represented by The General Prologue, and some of the comments from my external examiners. This review will not be exhaustive because the purpose of these Epilogues is to offer evidence of my own educational development in the creation of my own living educational theory which needed some explanatory contexts for the conclusions drawn in the original submission. The purpose of the Epilogues is not to 'prove' each point. My choice of incident for evaluation, together with reference to the development of this thesis, are themselves part of my claim to know my own educational development.

In Part One I sought to render transparent the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships with my Initial Teacher Education students - principally Sarah, but also Jenny, Justine and Zac. I attempted this through the representation of conversations, correspondence, taped meetings, and written reports - in other words through the emergent structures and forms - the morphology - of our educative relationships. I showed with

Sarah the pains I took to enable her to grow towards her own action research question and how I challenged her at the drafting stage of her final report to delve more deeply into the parallels between her own processes and those of Hugh, her pupil. I also noted, for example, how Emma, another student, recognised the parallels between her own practice as a teacher in the classroom and herself as a learner with me at the University.

It is here that I want to concentrate my present evaluation of Part One. In the external examiners' report was the following comment:

'...There is an aesthetic morphology with Jenny...But then, how do aesthetic standards of judgement help? Why is it that a dance that ends with one partner dominant (i.e. your exchange with Jenny) is less pleasing than the 'follow my leader with variations' that Sarah and you do?.. Or, if you had agreed, explicitly with Jenny to have different dances? Would that have been a more or less beautiful dance? Why?'

I would like to deal in detail with the aesthetic morphology first and then I will come to the point about standards of judgement.

I believe there is indeed an aesthetic morphology within every one of the educative relationships I develop with students or pupils. I believe this aesthetic morphology has to do with balancing - balancing the ethics, ontology and knowledge within the relationship. This in turn implies developing forms and structures through which such balancing can be best achieved. This is a highly complex activity because within the aesthetic for

me is an expansion of consciousness to include the reality, meanings, and experiences of others. This means that I cannot simply decide what is ethical and then enact it, using my position of power as, in this case, a university academic, to push forward my own insights. (I will write more about this in the Epilogue to Part Two.) The balancing is also about making my own expansion of consciousness active in the world with others in ways which improve the quality of our learning. In my educative relationship with Jenny I still suspect that I did not achieve the appropriate balance. In apparently silencing her, I did not give her an opportunity to explain her own values. Working with learners to articulate their world-view is one of the basic touchstones of individually-oriented action research (Evans, 1995; Laidlaw, 1994b; Whitehead, 1985, 1989b) and I value this emphasis. As I discuss in Part One it is a tricky balance to achieve between respecting the views and values of an individual and enacting one's own deeply held educational values if the two sets of values are in conflict. Where I still believe I did not succeed in living out my own educational values was in my failure at any time to help Jenny to articulate what her values were.

Developing an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships incurs for me a heavy ethical responsibility in which I may not assume might is right. Because of the highly subjective areas within my own aesthetic experiences from which in my educative relationships I am deriving meaning and purpose, I have to be careful, however, that I do not confuse my own agendas with those of the other learners. At this point in my own reflections, the ontological dimension of my aesthetic knowing becomes important because through that I am alerted to the reality of the other. In The General Prologue I show a greater awareness of the necessity of

balancing within my educative relationships. At one point I write:

Just as the Mariner has to open to that living truth and allow its meanings to become part of his abilities to act in the world (look what happens when he doesn't) I had to let go of ideas about my own world-view and see what it might mean to be Zoë in that situation. The implications of that I now find salutary: it is not for me to confuse particular abilities with human value. This was becoming a new, living, insight for me as opposed to being the rhetoric of my educational theory. I was certain in my own mind of my equality of regard for both of the girls and yet it seemed that my actions were allowing one girl to feel slighted...[Understanding that I was] acting against my own espoused values spurs me to try harder, to sacrifice ego for the common good.(p.18/19)

This opening up to others the right to explore their values touches on Buber's (1923) view of the educative relation in which the educator subordinates his or her own structured view of the world to the particular being of the student. What I had not balanced in my educative relationship with Jenny was a sufficient understanding of the learning which can be promoted through an exploration of personal values within a supportive and yet challenging environment, with my concern for the knowledge-base I was eager to communicate.

I did not follow up Jenny's concern with any of the forms of communication I had established with other students - like letters, or conversations. Had I been truly concerned about Jenny's values and her educational development I would have had data now to draw on in order to make claims about having helped her to improve the quality of learning with her pupils. I have none.

In The General Prologue I was concerned that my account of our Year Seven classroom did not just draw on data from the two girls whose educational development I concentrated on. This is why I included data on Hannah, Lisa, Katie, Julia, Vikki and others. Originally I had decided to write solely about Rebecca, but this did not satisfy me as again it was unbalanced in terms of the focus. Rebecca is highly academically able especially in English. She challenged me in a curricular way, but not so much in terms of my approach to teaching her. Zoë's inclusion in the text was necessary if I were to be true to my own value of being a learner in the process of teaching (McNiff, 1993). This time I had plenty of data to draw on, because I have learnt the ethical significance of concentrating equally on the children in my class and that collecting data on and with each child enables me to form a more individual educative relationship with that child. The balance I seek in my educative relationships must also be reflected in the quality and breadth of my information about each relationship. It is an ethical question because it is concerned with respecting individuals in action. I will return to this point in more depth in the Epilogue to Part Two.

My educative relationship with Jenny was unbalanced in the aesthetic sense because I denied her what I was advocating, which was the freedom to explore her values. Jack Whitehead (1989b) calls this process of denial a living contradiction. I perceive this state of affairs now as an aesthetic imbalance. However, I like the implied dialectic within the phrase 'living contradiction' (similar to the generativity of 'living educational theory') which is why I continue to use it. I now recognise that I was first attracted to the idea because it gave me the space to create processes of education and forms of representation around it, just as the Delaroche painting in

July, 1990, inspired me to connect particular values in an illuminating way. Similarly, negotiating educational standards of judgement can structure and enhance the learning process as I demonstrated in The General Prologue, and it is to the standards of judgement as an emergent structure within my own and others' learning that I now want to turn in a bid to clarify one of the most significant aspects of my own educational development.

In this resubmission I am struck by the apparent contradiction of my advocating developmental standards of judgement throughout the text, (particularly towards the end of the research) and laying out in my Introduction a series of categories by which I am asking you to judge this text. As Eisner (1993) says:

'experience can never be displayed in the form in which it initially appeared,' (p.7)

and thus in a text which describes and explains my own educational development I can only point towards that development. I cannot show you the thing itself. In a recent article, MacLure (1996) writes this:

'If we abandoned the search for singularity and explanation it is not clear how we could address some of the concerns that motivated the inclusion of a life-history component in the Teachers as Researchers movement.' (p.284)

This thesis is my explanation for my own educational development. In order to enhance its educational validity I can only point towards the

weaknesses of its representation and show a consistent motivation to seek appropriate forms of representation. I will not necessarily be able to solve all the challenges. It is in the nature of explanation that development can only be revealed by outcome. This is why I believe description is so vitally important to any claims to educational knowledge I can make. Description and explanation can act in a dialectical relationship such that at a particular point of sophistication they are blended into each other and lend the text a multi-dimensional richness and verisimilitude. I think I have achieved this in The General Prologue. For example I wrote this:

I know that I tend to ask most of the questions, to which I already have a fair idea of the answers. They seemed to be asking questions to which they wished to know the answers for themselves. They were not my questions, but their own. I need to build on this. This is not a simple process, not merely a simple way to get them to ask questions but an exploration of what values underlie such processes. What happens to power and knowledge in the educative relationship when the learners are asking their own questions? When they are motivated to find out because it seems genuinely worthwhile to them to do so? If the worthwhileness to them is also an aspect of what seems worthwhile to me as the educator and the responsible adult, then it seems a wholly educative undertaking. Perhaps this is the value of the poem for me as a teacher-researcher: it leads to an exploration of such moral questions in an educative way for all concerned. Perhaps that is why time and time again I come back to it. (p.9)

As I describe the situation in the classroom I explain its significance in terms of educational intentions, development and knowledge.

The standards of judgement contained within The Introduction represent a static profile of my development to date. The description of the standards was not achieved in isolation, however. Indeed some of them, like

'ontology', and 'aesthetic', were pointed out as being inadequately explained in the previous submission of this thesis. This has enabled me to develop them more clearly, not only in terms of their descriptive power, but within my educational practice as represented by The General Prologue. The criteria in The Introduction can perhaps now act as a starting point for dialogue between us. I aspire towards forms within my educational processes which encourage the negotiation of educational standards of judgement and yet sometimes the limitations of representational forms may constrain this value. This is one of the reasons I have given you the opening to my thesis in its present form - a description and explanation of my core values which show a process of educational development over time (The General Prologue) - together with a more formal, analytical and explanatory text (The Introduction).

I want now to turn back to Part One for a final look at what it represents in terms of my own educational development. The title of this part of my narrative is:

'A Search for my Educational Standards of Judgement: The Aesthetic Morphology of my Educative Relationships. The Creation of my own Living Educational Theory.'

In the section entitled 'Action Reflection Cycle as a Systematic Enquiry' (beginning on p. 103) I write the following:

'I am claiming that my deep comprehension through experience and careful research, has enabled me to, for example, create with my students standards of judgement which live and develop just

as their insights do...I believe that this living process...has an aesthetic morphology by which I can judge the educative relationships in which I have been involved and which constitute my claim to be creating my own living educational theory'. (p.122)

This is a huge claim - that I am developing standards of judgement with my students which develop as their insights do. I did not have evidence for that assertion. Furthermore, I had read through the Special Studies which the Initial Teacher Education students had written and extrapolated from them the values which I felt they contained. I did not negotiate these with the students and check back with them even about whether my judgements were correct. I do not think this emanated from a desire to wield power - I still remember the euphoria I felt on reading their accounts as they seemed so full of all the values which I was myself in education to promote. At that stage, however, I did not understand the value of first, making individuals' values explicit and then structuring their development as I feel I have subsequently done in my work with my Year Seven pupils. For example I wrote in The General Prologue:

On 5.1.96. we got together as a group to discuss what would be the criteria we could use as a class in judging the quality of the work being produced in preparation for the final presentations.

Zoë: *'We've got to understand it, haven't we? I mean, whatever anyone does, we have to understand it..'*

Maira: *'Brilliant, yes. Can we think of a way of describing that - what Zoë said?'*

Rebecca: *'Understandability, Miss!'*

(general laughter)

Maira: *'Any advance on that? 'Understandability' sounds a bit clumsy, but you're*

right, Rebecca, you've got the idea.'

Jo: *'Is it comprehensible or something?'*

Moirira: *'Comprehensibility, yes. O.K., then, are we agreed? What you produce has to be comprehensible. We have to understand it. Well done Zoë, Rebecca and Jo on that one.'*

We went on to discuss several more ways of judging the work. Here's what we came up with:

- 1) Comprehensibility: the work has to be understandable. It has to make sense.*
- 2) Carefulness: it has to be the result of hard work and attention to detail.*
- 3) Collaboration: it has to show evidence of working with (an) other(s) in some way, however small. (Learning partners can help here.) (p.30)*

This discussion with the girls seems to me to work on many educational fronts. I believe it enables many of us to develop together a sense of what we mean by certain terms so that we can communicate more effectively with each other. It reinforces the value I am placing on individual as well as group points of view in coming to solutions. It shows in action the value of co-operation. The negotiation is also appropriate in a curricular sense as the girls are extending their own vocabularies in the pursuit of knowledge. In this process the girls always worked with a learning partner in order to develop their own educational standards of judgement. Such collaboration was not one of the structures I set up with my Initial Teacher Education students.

What I have learnt from my recent educational research is how much of the educational value of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships resides within the meanings behind 'morphology'. The emergent structures and forms of my educative relationships can focus the

values inherent within the aesthetic. I come back again to the notion of balance with which this Epilogue is concerned. Another helpful way of expressing this balance is through terms such as 'living dialectics' (see The Introduction), 'educational development' and 'living educational theory'. It is within the immanent dialectic, however, that the most significant aspects of my own educational development can be expressed. Within each of the subsequent Parts of the thesis with their new Epilogues, I will be exploring the significance of trying to represent an immanent dialectic of my own educational development. This is as I develop the use-value of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships in the creation and testing of my own living educational theory.

*"God save thee, Ancient Mariner!
From the fiends that plague thee thus! -
Why look'st thou so?" With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.'*

The Ancient Mariner has to learn how to balance his ontological and ethical responsibilities, just as I seek to represent my own search for an aesthetic balance in the creation of my own living educational theory.

Prologue to Part Two

'Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.'

July, 1996. In 'The Ancient Mariner', the protagonist kills the albatross which has been hailed as a good spirit. This represents his alienation from the purpose of Life: he does not recognise the necessary connectedness of all things and thus his redemption is arduous and long. He is awakened to his responsibility as one human being to all other human beings through an aesthetic experience in which he perceives the water snakes surrounding the ship as divinely beautiful. He recognises in their beauty his own corruption. Through this act of connecting with other beings he begins to lose the crippling guilt, symbolised by the albatross hanging round his neck, and becomes free to take responsibility for his own life at last, and thus to play a meaningful role in his own and other's destinies.

I see Part Two as being implicitly concerned with myself as an educator taking responsibility for my own life and playing a meaningful role in my own and other's destinies. In the Epilogue to Part Two I will explain the extent to which I was able to live out my stated concerns.

In this Part I believe I show a greater understanding about the way in which my own 'I' within the action research cycle plays a part in the development of my understanding, than I did in Part One. However, I have still not made the links explicit enough. Instead of referring to the literature or showing how what I am doing differs from other enquiries, I am not yet doing much more than revealing development, rather than

educational development. However, there is still, it seems to me, a greater explicit concern to enable my Masters degree student, CC Lin, to find her own voice within the action research enquiry she is undertaking. In addition I am beginning to try to describe and explain some of the values as they emerge in practice over time, rather than presenting them without explanation. This is the first time that I begin to show what it means for my own understanding to try to articulate the immanent dialectic at the heart of my practice in an apposite form. (See the section in The Introduction and in the Epilogue to Part Four on the immanent dialectic.) I am also beginning to articulate here the nature of my own developmental standards of judgement within my action enquiry.

The account you are about to read consists of two letters. CC wrote to me in August 1993 towards the end of her own one-year course here at Bath University and challenged some of the conclusions I had come to about my work. I had shown her my own writing in the course of tutoring her for her action enquiry. She was trying to discover a way of authentically representing her struggle to find her own voice in a context which she did not find conducive to her ways of knowing. In the account you are about to read I present her letter and my response. In placing so much emphasis on the beauty of her own writing and my reply, I try to show what it means for me as an educator to bear in mind the connections between the ontology and ethics of my practice within an aesthetic form of communication. I liken this attempt to integrate these elements of my educational concerns to a connection I am making between the artist (the person), the art canvas (the educational process) and the art critic (the teacher-researcher) - in other words combining the individual's sense of worth and purpose (the ontology), with an analysis of the significance of

so doing in the name of education (the ethics) in a synthesis which communicates its meanings (the aesthetics).

At the time of writing Part Two, however, I was not as aware as I am now of the knowledge which such a synthesis was creating, nor of the ethical implications of the ownership of that knowledge. It is in the Epilogue to Part Two that I offer you a more detailed analysis of the ethical implications of what it means to speak for yourself in the name of education. At the time I wrote Part Two I was also fond of using the term 'educational epistemology'. I now favour the term 'educational knowledge' as it expresses what I mean, as opposed to a theory of educational knowledge which I understand by the term 'educational epistemology'. The term 'epistemology' still appears in this Part of the thesis, however, and I have not sought to excise it falsely. In the Prologues and Epilogues I rarely use the term, if at all.

Part Two: In Search of Synthesis (written in 1993)

'Don't withdraw your research to one side of the story. An educative relationship and aesthetic morphology are two-way. Tell me what you are now. I see a doctor in the writing and I want to see more than a doctor.' (Letter from CC Lin to Moira Laidlaw, 15.8.93.)

Autumn, 1993. It was not until I received a letter dated 15.8.93. from CC, that I began to understand how I needed to fulfil the promise of this thesis. I had not specifically asked her to write to me at all, but I always hope that the critical openness between us might encourage her to speak about whatever she wants as it becomes appropriate. She is now writing up her M.Ed. dissertation and has recently re-read parts of my thesis and some of my other papers in preparation for answering her own question about how she can enhance her own educational management skills.

After finishing Part One of this thesis I was left with a void of disappointment. Something is missing. In fact quite a lot. I have been aware of a sense of deficiency in an explanation about the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. And within this aspect of judgement resides, in my own educational development, an ontological as well as a confluence of my educational knowledge. I have looked back through the whole text and found unanswered questions whose significance I didn't understand even though many of them I had posed to myself. In the light of CC's letter, I would like to reiterate those questions and introduce a few more from others who have read the text in order to satisfy something within which recognises, and yet at this moment cannot fully articulate, what is necessary for this writing to achieve a synthesis of representation with its purpose. Three of the questions which I am posing myself, which CC and I discussed informally, and which it seems relevant

to introduce here are:

- 1) How can I know that I am performing [an appropriate] art of living in ways which follow from the nature of life in general and human existence in particular?
- 2) How might I improve the crafting of my own life in education for the benefit of myself and my students?
- 3) How can I show within this thesis and in my practice the necessity of viewing aesthetics and ethics as aspects of each other?

CC's challenges will, I believe, enable me to give some fuller answers to those questions than my thesis has as yet managed. Please bear these questions in mind as I set out on the most ambitious writing journey I have ever undertaken.

I have set out to judge the quality of my educative relationships through this standard of judgement I am terming an aesthetic morphology. There are potential aspects of educational validity which remain as yet only hints. I know that as an educational text, descriptions cannot stand without explanation. A great work of art, as I have already argued, contains its own symbolic reality fusing form and content at the point of significance. This work, if it is to be representative of an educational living art form, must demonstrate and then explain that point of significance. I haven't done it yet. It took CC's letter to show me what was needed. I reproduce her writing in full because it is, in itself, a delicately framed work of art. I do not wish to disturb its beauty and inner coherence. I will then take points from the letter as they have arisen, and without, I hope, disturbing the uniqueness of her voice, I will attempt to contextualise and

justify my own thesis more fully:

There is a question which keeps coming to my mind:

If the theme of the thesis is about an educative relationship in order to develop an individual's educational development, as the titles you gave to different sections of your thesis, papers and transcripts [suggest]: 'the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationship with Sarah'; 'an educative conversation between CC Lin and Moira Laidlaw'; and 'Nigel Brown and Moira Laidlaw working together: the Power of Educative Correspondences,' (Laidlaw,1993)- and the individuals who have worked with you, have always felt in some way that there is an equality of human rights and the value of individuals' intelligence and wisdom - how have you shown the link between the equality and the educative relationship in the written work?

Maybe I do not understand what you mean by educative relationship and aesthetic morphology - that I thought these terms did not just imply an educative relationship to the individuals whom you have worked with, or what they learned and the transformation into intellectuals (according to Sarah's comments at the last meeting) -

which was held on 29.6.93. in order to sum up what the group felt that they had learned, received and given to the action research process...

- but also to you.

To have pupils' voices in our reports is not enough. We also need our

pupils' evaluations on what we have quoted from them and how we have put our quotations into context. Sarah's letter on the evaluation of her work is not enough. Nigel's 'Turning the Tables on Power', (Brown and Laidlaw, 1993) does not serve the function either, and I had never written anything to you relating to what you have written so far until now.

You told me you wanted to learn from me and you told me you learned from your work with others, but what has shown in your writing is that you have learned from your awareness of your actions to others; you have learned from your inner reflection, interactively, but silently, during the process. I might be wrong that I feel there is a lack of validity on 'educative relationship' and 'aesthetic morphology' in the writing. Where are you? In the facilitator's office only? You have more than one office. Is it possible to invite some colleagues somewhere up there from their theorist's offices to have a trip to your other offices? (Maybe not, for some of them may be non-smokers!)

Moir, I can see how much you have tried to bring life into your research and you have shown me the beauty of life so many times when I was stuck with the unbearable meaninglessness of it. You brought me back to earth. You brought a life back to more than one person. You brought a life back to me, to Guy, to the people who love me and who need me to do the same thing for them in the future. Maybe it is too much to ask you: 'Don't withdraw your research to one side of the story. Educative relationship and aesthetic morphology are two-way. Tell me what you are now. I see Dr. Laidlaw in the writing and I want to see more than a Dr..

The Dance is grand and The Music is inviting.

(This alludes to our first taped conversation on 1.12.92. when she was preparing her first assignment for Action Research on the M.Ed. module.)

In reply to your doubt on the metaphor 'Dance', I used in one of our conversations that: 'it connotes performance, skilled, but with little or no interaction with the audience. The steps for a dance are all learnt before they are introduced to the recipients, whereas in teaching I would expect there to be a largely interactive process which may change the teacher's original intentions. The dance is not the result of a developmental process with the audience. Indeed, the word, 'audience' itself connotes passivity, spectators, looking, not being involved.'

Was it not already there - your dance - before I came to you or before you found me? It is a dance which is inviting, not imposing. The audience may choose to leave in the midst of the dance when he or she finds it is not a dance he or she can enjoy. Yes, 'the steps for a dance are all learnt before they are introduced to the recipients', but are our lives as educators not like that, that either of us have already developed our skills, examined our conditionings, and tentatively formed our concepts? Even though there might not be any physical involvement during the performance, the imaginative and emotional interpretations of the acts are not passive. They are silent interactions. The dancer dances for the audience and the audience views the performance which becomes a part of his or her memory, his/her life.

As to the questions in the same conversation, I wondered, 'you have

found your own stage to dance on...But again how many are there who are in your audience?...Isn't that selfish?' It makes sense now that you replied, 'I think it might be realistic. I think it might be in a sense almost natural.'

Usually we choose to go for a certain dancer's performance, but I mistakenly walked into your dance and the music was inviting. We danced a duet, you and I, and I and you; and a trio, you and Jack and I; I, you and my students. Our audiences are not being prohibited from dancing on our stages. Many people have danced with Jack, as you said. I am so honored to have a duet with you. There was only you and me for a while. Our dance is beautiful. Sometimes you are the dancer, I am the admirer, and sometimes you are my only audience, I the dancer. When the time comes, I will have to leave and to dance on my own stage. I will always be your faithful admirer and sincere critic as long as you reserve a ticket for me.

Taking notes.

(This refers to another aspect of the same conversation cited above, in which in reply to my question to her about how I could help her in her action enquiry, she said: 'Note taking!')

I realized how much has not been explicitly articulated while we were having those conversations. My mind and sentiments have always been going so quickly that I could not express them with the aid of words. It is more than taking notes of what I have said and not to allow them 'to filter away before she can focus on them'. I remember vividly how I felt when

you asked, 'How can I help you in your action research? What can I do?' and I said, 'Note taking.' When I said that, I felt like crying, because what I was asking was, 'take notes of me, so part of my life will continue to live in yours and it won't disappear into the emptiness of the meanings of human life.' However, without the notes taken by myself, what is taken down is not complete.

(My reply was started on 16.8.93.)

Dear CC,

A few points about your letter. It has been inspirational to me. Thank you so much. It has touched a chord deep within and I know that it has provided me with an inspiration that will unlock my ability to articulate something profound about my practice and my desire to be true to my educational values. It has enabled me to have conversations with you, Jack and myself which have encouraged me to distil from my practice and the writing about this practice, insights into the significance of representing my insights and the insights of others in ways which truly accord form and content an indivisibility. Your letter sets me this challenge straight away:

How have you shown the link between the equality and the educative relationship in the written work?

Throughout the text of this thesis I have attempted to reveal my desire to minimise power-differentials between my students and myself that were predicated upon ego, ambition and purely self-gratification. Power does not have to be a negative force, however. For example there were times

when I chose not to communicate my greater understanding of a situation (having had experience of action enquiry processes that exceeded my students') because in my judgement a student was not ready to hear what I might have known. An example of this is in the work with Sarah (in Part One) when at the beginning of our first conversation I did not contradict her although I thought what she was saying was not necessarily factually valid. I weighed up my ethical consideration as an educator with my desire to be open with her. In that case an educative strategy won over straightforward candour. To hold a conversation with someone as if what they are saying has in itself merit when in fact I don't perceive it as such, suggests a manipulation through my greater knowledge and awareness of possible outcomes. Noblit (1993) characterises this as constituting: *'the difference between power and moral authority'* (p.24). If what I do is in the name of education, then I will have this responsibility of discriminate action. He goes on to say:

'in a caring relation, power does not render the other into an object, but rather maintains and promotes the other as subject. Power is used to confirm, not disconfirm the other...It is not about competition...but about connection and construction. Caring is a tough relationship in that the care-giver must be strong and courageous so that he or she can use the good to control 'that which is not good.' (p.35)

As I have written in Part One, it is in discussions about our perceptions of power which will determine how fully I am trying to live out my value of promoting equality in my educative relationships. Let me explain. My own educational experience (under which I understand my educational practice, systematic research, reflection and writing) has shown me that

negotiated decisions which impinge upon responsibility for actions to be undertaken are the ones which determine the quality of parity between tutor and student. Kincheloe (1991) expresses it differently, but in a way I believe which supports such a view:

'the question which grounds our attempt to formulate a system of meaning on which to base our action research asks: If what we designate as truth is relational and not certain, then what set of assumptions can we use to guide our activities as professionals, to inform our questions as action researchers,' (p.37, my emphasis)

It is his notion of 'what we designate' as true and meaningful which I find most significant. As I stated in Part One before the account of my work with Sarah:

'I want a form of educational representation which does justice to my understanding that it is within a constant struggle to find with my students where the responsibility for the ethics (collaboration, democratic practices, social justice, goodness, truth, beauty, etc.) resides at any given moment in our discourse, that the aesthetic of such a relationship rests. '

My reasons to attempt to find an aesthetic morphology of an educative relationship are not from a desire predicated upon an understanding that there is 'a gap in the market', so to speak: in other words to get a Ph.D. because one of the criteria depends on original research. My wish rested initially upon, and has grown from, an intuition that to be able to appraise an organic process in the name of education in a way which combines personal taste in a matter of beauty - an aesthetic - and rigorously applied

standards of judgement which were negotiable at every stage - the morphology - would be to develop an understanding of the dialectic between personal responsibility and public processes (in this case, educational processes). Harrington and Garrison (1992), put it this way:

'Ends are states of affairs that we desire. They are aesthetic ideas and sometimes moral ideas also. Choices about means are moral and, sometimes, aesthetic decisions. If these cases are constructed to be value/neutral, then they must fail; and, anyway, value-neutrality is a value-decision, one that resembles relativism.'

(p.716)

It seems to me that my aesthetically-bound evaluation within my educative relationships clearly rests on its potential to combine moral, spiritual, procedural, epistemological and ontological values. To seek an aesthetic morphology within my relationships is itself, it seems to me, a moral endeavour. This presupposes that greater understanding signifies an improvement in practice, that it develops a practical wisdom, a hallmark of individually-orientated action research. Let me once again, step outside this propositional form of words and give you an example.

I asked all the action research PGCE students this year if they would answer questions about my facilitation of their enquiries. We held a meeting to that end, but Sarah volunteered the following to some questions which I had written down to focus the discussion at the meeting:

a) What responsibility do you think I had in your enquiry?

15.6.93. *I think the responsibility you undertook in my enquiry was to educate me, to forward my learning - and need I say it? I think you did this. I was going to word the statement above differently and say, 'I think your responsibility was', but I changed my mind. All the other lecturers seem to have seen their responsibility as markers and moderators. You went much further and as a result, my action research enquiry has been the most important, rewarding and worthwhile part of the course for me. You fulfilled the responsibility in a variety of ways. The questions you asked me were 'spot on' and really made me think. Sometimes you made statements which made me think differently or which were enlightening. For example, your comments on differentiation which I quote in my enquiry. You were always there, always willing to help, ever patient and welcoming. You also gave me a lot of confidence and raised my self-esteem. You really cared - you wrote me letters. You pushed me at the right time and you didn't let me get away with doing less than my best - but you did it nicely!*

For me the question I asked was vital. I wanted to understand how Sarah viewed her own responsibility as well as mine. As her tutor to ask her directly about her responsibility might have been a potentially threatening approach. I believe that moral choices in education are also aesthetic ones. I made a conscious choice through an understanding of a possible perception of power on her part. What has this to do with your original question, CC:

'How have you shown the link between the equality and the educative relationship in the written work?'

If issues of power, morality and making public are part of aesthetic considerations, (and my thesis is an attempt to reveal an aesthetic within my educative relationships) then to claim a high level of aesthetic within my educative relationships there will be connections between equality, students speaking for themselves, responsibility for development, and negotiated realities.

In a sense I think you are asking me to show more clearly in my written work what equality can possibly mean within my educative relationships. Can there be equality at all? I am saying that a judgement on my work as having a high quality of aesthetic value will be partly found in the ways in which I show that I live out my espoused values of promoting equality within the educative relationship and that the morphology is represented by the ways in which we achieve that. Here I think the following from Ash (1992) makes sense:

'Aesthetic decisions - and by this I mean participatory actions, not the judgements of observing critics - are made by those who are involved in the action. Since the actor cannot be dissociated from the action, such decisions must concern the whole of whatever is being decided. (It is only by being detached that the observer can fragment a whole into its parts.) An aesthetic decision is concerned with rightness, appropriateness, etc..' (p.70)

And that's the point for me. That what you have forced me to see so vividly, is that I am making a choice about appropriateness. You suggest that I talk and write about equality, but where is it? And indeed, what do I and my students understand by it? I hope, CC, that this response to your

letter, its inclusion as a pivotal point of my thesis, will demonstrate something about working towards an equality of representation at least. In the end, though, this is my thesis. It is my representation for I am examined on it, not you or anyone else. But the point is well taken.

For example, I take absolutely, your point:

'to have pupils' voices in our reports is not enough. We also need our pupils' evaluations on what we have quoted from them and how we have put our quotations into context. Sarah's letter on the evaluation of her work is not enough. Nigel's 'Turning the Tables on Power', (Brown and Laidlaw, 1993) does not serve the function either, and I had never written anything to you relating to what you have written so far until now.'

Yes, I think you have taken my understanding in action of enabling students to speak with their own voices one step further. In my article submitted to the *Educational Action Research Journal* (Laidlaw, 1994b) I try to define what I think 'students speaking for themselves' or 'in their own voices' means; however I do not refer to a conversation Sarah and I had about the paper I wrote, which now, in the light of what you have written, CC, encourages me to think that its omission was a significant epistemological limitation. Clearly I recognised the necessity of practising what I preached in terms of receiving feedback from Sarah about what I had written on our educative relationship, but I didn't take it the requisite step further and demonstrate in practice the way in which its inclusion might have advanced our educative understanding. Shortly I will include an extract from that conversation as an attempt to redress an imbalance in

terms of living out one of my espoused values.

I did on frequent occasions with my PGCE students this year explain the difference as I perceived it, between quoting from pupils/students, and those pupils and/or students truly speaking with their own voices. In my work with Sarah in Part One, in the conversation we had concerning the drafting of her final report, I do express dissatisfaction with her writing, in that quoting pupils does not mean that they are speaking with their own voices. I would like to show you now, CC, what I do consider to be in a written form a quality which I am claiming I try to exercise in my educative relationships. You ask me what equality in an educative relationship looks like. I ask myself what is the connection between the ethics and the aesthetics of my practice, of which I perceive a degree of equality (which quality will become, I feel certain, clearer in a moment) to be necessarily integral; therefore I think we are asking compatible questions. One example when I am presenting a written expression of this connectedness between equality and educative relationship is in the form of this part of the thesis itself. You present your own unique reactions to work which indeed impinges on you and which you demand now listens to your own insights. I accept that challenge. Is this thesis now approaching a greater aesthetic harmony through the embracing of your voice as separate and equal? Is it showing more of what it means to make a living quality of equality between tutor and student within an account?

I think so far what I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis is my understanding in practice of the educative significance of acting fairly and justly in Peters' (1966) sense, although I take your point that I have sometimes seemed to leave an explicit representation of this fairness and

justice rather undetailed and unsubstantiated: I have only hinted both structurally and implicitly at the meaning of fairness and justice within my educative relationships. However, I have not yet, I believe, done justice to what it is I perceive at my best I have achieved in my educative relationships in terms of promoting a quality of fairness and justice. I agree with Peters when he writes that notions of justice and fairness which impinge epistemologically with equality are promoted through:

'the valuation placed...upon the determining role of individuals' points of view. Individuals will only tend to assert their rights as individuals, to take pride in their achievements, to deliberate carefully and choose for themselves what they ought to do, and to develop their own individual style of emotional reaction...if they are encouraged to do so.'

(p.211)

I suppose I have tried to do in my practice is to demonstrate what fairness and justice look like, and I think you're right, that in the written explanation I have not recognised what showing this in action looks like in writing. In the example I have given above about Sarah's evaluation of my facilitation, for example, I still set the parameters. There is still the residue of my role as a facilitator and hers as a student. Speaking with her own voice would necessitate something articulated outside the parameters which I alone have set. I do not mean entirely in her parameters either, for it is an educative relationship and that necessitates interaction. With Sarah the closest she and I have come to that, it seems to me, was in a conversation held on 16.6.93. about the article which I had written about our dialogical work together, based on one conversation on 18.3.93.. I was claiming its democratising potential within an action enquiry framework.

She had read the text and as a result we had the conversation. It therefore arose from a negotiated platform, from a desire on our part to integrate her perceptions with my own in ways which would embody the value of educational democracy that I was advocating in the article:

ML I'd love to know what you thought about the paper, anything at all.

SD Yeah, well I was really interested that you picked this conversation to write about. This was the point when I actually felt, yes, I'm really doing this...I was just talking to CC about it, and saying to her, I came in with this amorphous cloud into that conversation, and went out with a fixed parcel...I wasn't aware that you had an agenda at first...Then you said at one point, 'I want to say this, and I'm going to say it now.' (This was the question: 'In an account of your professional development, what standards of judgement will you be using to test the validity of your account?') We've talked before about setting parameters and leading somebody on and increasing their learning. You have to be quite directive to do that, I think. I went into something yesterday and it was quite undirected and it was a waste of time. That's not learning, that just frustrating...

ML You don't think it's a contradiction to democracy?

SD How you are directive? Interesting... You see the thing is, isn't it a bit like student-centred learning? What you were doing here, you've got an agenda, yeah?

ML Yes.

SD You have parameters, boundaries, just like me with the kids, you won't let them do certain things. There's a structure.

ML What were my boundaries? What was my agenda?

SD But there was what my agenda was, as well. There was the two things

coming together there. That's where the democracy comes in, I think. There were the two of us. I definitely had an agenda. And so did you. We negotiated what our agenda was to be. It seems to me that you've got values that as teachers we need to be aware of, no, let me put that another way, that we need to explore for ourselves. You're saying, here it is. There's this door. Go through and have a look.

ML (laughs)

SD I was talking to CC about this as well. If you'd said to me, you've got to explore these values, you've got to find these values, when you're addressing that question, that would not have been democratic. What you actually said was, let's find the question, and how are you going to answer it? I could have come up with all sorts of values, though, couldn't I?

ML Could you, though? You see I wonder whether I have been involved with a self-fulfilling prophecy. That I have this idea that democratic values are good in the education process, therefore I get my students to see the democratic processes are good within the enquiry. So when I ask about what was valuable, people come up with what I wanted them to say in the first place. So how is that different from a system whereby you're told what to think?

SD I can see what you mean. We had discussions about pupil-centred learning...but we're all reasonably intelligent human beings who are not only working with you. We're working with our own experiences and working them out in the classroom and...I knew that they were working. I knew that there was something educational about democratisation, because I was living it in the classroom.

Does this go further to answering your qualms, which I feel are valid,

about my work?

To have pupils' voices in our reports is not enough. We also need our pupils' evaluations on what we have quoted from them and how we have put our quotations into context. Sarah's letter on the evaluation of her work is not enough.

I would suggest that it achieves some authenticity in the sense that Sarah is articulating her own ideas, formed from her own experience, that she is showing an ability to draw conclusions which do not have to rest upon my validation.

Are you not also saying something else very important? My knowledge is not sufficient on its own; as an educator who seeks to live out principles of equality, I must seek to form my knowledge with theirs, in this case yours, Sarah's, Nigel's, Zac's and Justine's. At least my knowledge and propositions about that knowledge are at best incomplete. I have always asked my students for evaluations of the work which I have written about them. I think this is to do with courtesy. I think it is to do with respect. Most of all I see it as something inevitable for me, for it's an ontological stance I have on life. We are all human beings playing, I believe, different roles. I have chosen 'educator' as my specific role. But in the end, strip that away and I, like you, am a human being. You say this at the beginning of your dissertation (Lin, 1993):

'I am an individual person between the sky and the earth. I am no different from anyone else. I have feelings, happy, sad, depressed, pain, love and fears. I was born by a woman and will die one day.' (p.1)

Yes. I identify with that, and perceive a further dimension in answer to your question. A point at which the particular way in which I tried to live out the value of equality in my educative relationships should have become more clear. Do you remember that conversation we had on 1.12.92.? It was a key one for me because it came before the work I did with my PGCE students and therefore enabled me to begin thinking about the ramifications of promoting equality within my educative relationships. Remember?

CC Yes, we can tell the students what they need and why do I think they need it. But it has to be, one has to be very careful about the power. And where I argue with Jack is when you say so, do you say that, do you not think I am not able to judge? But to me I know I like to argue and I refuse something before I accept it, and not everyone is like me and some people accept everything that is said. This is dangerous.

ML And that is something that I think that we also in our educative relationship must be aware of, that I particularly because I am the tutor, and it is something I struggle with because I have a notion that as human beings there is an absolute equality. There must be such equality. It is in the nature of our humanity that we can relate to each other as equals. We are equal however, but different, because I am here in an educational capacity and that gives me a certain responsibility. I struggle with that responsibility because what I don't want the responsibility to be is patronising to you. And that is where I ask you to remind me if I overstep the rights that I have. Does that make sense to you?

C.C. Oh yes.

ML I think it's absolutely crucial. Indeed I don't think a relationship can

be educational, not truly educational unless that's clearly understood between both of us, because then there is an equality and a difference, perhaps what we do together is act as critical friends. That seems to me to be a very powerful collaboration and I certainly feel that what I am doing here is learning at least as much as you're learning. If I didn't feel I was learning something I would think the relationship was not particularly educational. It's a dynamic process.

In this conversation I am struggling to express what equality means to me in this educative relationship. It is a give and take. It is about respect for you and for myself. It is about creating a space in which our truths can be spoken for the good of ourselves and others. It is about opening up the dialectic between rules and freedom. And describing responsibility. When I said I was learning as much as you, I knew it to be true in the sense that I was aware of the potential which existed in a situation in which so quickly we could talk about the things that really mattered to us, whether the same or not. From my point of view, this anatomising of the dynamics of our educative relationship seemed to me to be of genuinely educational potential for us both.

Later on in the same conversation this transpired. And CC, as I read it back to myself now, I recognise its power to inform my spirit and address to you a grateful heartfelt vote of thanks that you inspired me to revisit this place, to write about it and thus celebrate its significance with you and others. Thank you.

ML As long, I think, as far as my values are concerned, to be prepared to keep on being challenged. Then I don't feel I will become static. I will

keep moving, not stand still, for I believe that education is about movement and development. And I need to be challenged so that I can develop. If I cannot develop, how can I help my students to develop? I think you said that once. So that's my answer. I don't know whether it answers you.

CC So how can I help you? Because we share so much that is the same. You believe, I believe. I believe what you have already believed.

ML But where you help me, CC, is in showing me by the process we are engaged in now, how can I respond in the most educational way to what you and others need? Now, I don't feel that I have necessarily come close to finding the answer there. I still feel that I have a long way to go, so you are helping me. Every time we discuss I am learning about the process, and by learning more about the process with you, perhaps I will be better equipped to deal with other people. I don't know that but I think it's probable.

CC Then you will be much more prepared to meet the students or the individuals who share similar views and they are struggling to find their way out. Their ways out. And that's what I found that it was every time you meet someone. What happens if you meet someone who is completely different from us? Like your teacher said, you should read the critics first. And you can say the teacher was wrong - he or she was educated that way. And I really hate to see people are already set in a trap. Probably they were set up the trap themselves. Is it appropriate for us, is it educative for us to tell them. you are trapped.' They are comfortable in that trap.

ML That is the risk we were talking about before. If we challenge people on a fundamental basis of their understanding of life...

CC ...then we will destroy them.

ML We will destroy them. Therefore again we have to have for me, you see this is where you are helping me, because you are forcing me to express these things, and I have not had to express them before. I think the most important things as I see it in education is an openness to the other. And that is - if I am self, then everyone else is other. If you are self, then I am other. And that's the starting point. If you don't have that openness, you see, someone says to me, 'you've got to do it this way', is not open to the other. One who is open to the other says, 'what way do you think you need to do it? I have this experience, which is possibly different from yours. Tell me what your experience is. Let's discuss it....And now we've discussed it, what do you think you need to do now?' I think that's the only way of answering it.

CC Yes, I agree.

ML I also have to say, and this is something I have talked about before, actually at lunchtime, even though you and I appear to have similar values, I am not sure that another human being's values can ever be an exact match. Because you are you and unique and I am me, also unique. Our values are unique. We understand and feel them in different ways. And that process of getting to know the other is educational.

Can you see now how you have helped me? I had conceptual understanding about development and movement which I say are necessary in education. You have helped me to live that understanding and thus augment its significance for me. So what then is this equality I keep talking about? Well, it's not something for me which is enshrined in an idea or in some book. For me it is evolved, if at all through relationships. I cannot give a definition of equality which is meaningful to me. I think this reluctance is excellently summed up by Belenky et al

(1986):

*'Connected knowing arises out of the experience of relationships;
it requires intimacy and equality between self and object, not
distance and impersonality; its goal is understanding, not proof.'*

(p.183)

There is a problem here, though, of definition. I cannot define what this 'equality' is. I can only tell you what it looks like in relationships. Therefore it is going to differ from person to person. My experience of relating to you as an equal is going to be different from my experience with Sarah, for example. Perhaps, though, the one unifying experience for me in all these educative relationships is my awareness of the other as human, as I am. Not as student, tutee, subordinate or novice, but as a human being. Another way of expressing that is as a learner with me on a journey whose precise destination neither of us can really predict. I suppose, although it sounds like blowing my own trumpet, this is what Buber (1947) calls the 'necessary humility of the educator'. With you, CC, I believe that I have been able to represent that equality between us more directly and significantly than I have managed with Sarah and this is due in part to the processes which we evolved together.

And from this point I can no longer simply write about 'equality'. I think a powerful force for me in my educative relationships which until now I have subsumed under a banner labelled 'equality', is in fact mutuality. In conversation with Jack about the previous few pages, he articulated an unease I was beginning to feel. I think the conversations between us which are cited above suggest something of the quality of what Buber

(1923) writes about:

'Because this human being exists: therefore he must be really there, really facing the child, not merely there in spirit...In order to be and to remain truly present to the child he must have gathered the child's presence into his own store as one of the bearers of his communion with the world... There is a reality between them, there is mutuality.'

(p.126)

I think I can claim that in our work together that we have achieved a mutuality. That my desire in my educative relationships is, where appropriate, to aspire towards a mutuality. This of course may not be appropriate, but I feel with you, it was. When you say:

Moir, I can see how much you have tried to bring life into your research and you have shown me the beauty of life so many times when I was stuck with the unbearable meaninglessness of it. You brought me back to earth. You brought a life back to more than one person. You brought a life back to me, to Guy, to the people who love me and who need me to do the same thing for them in the future,

then I am reminded of Buber again in such a poignant way:

'trust, trust in the world because this person exists - that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education. Because this human being exists meaninglessness, however hard pressed you are by it, cannot be the real truth.' (p.125)

In my diary on 7.6.93. I wrote a poem in which I was trying to express something of a mutuality through which mutual growth can be encouraged. I recognise the potential technologisation of processes which are merely designed to promote preconceived ends, in which there is no room for negotiation, just as Carr and Kemmis (1986) warn educational researchers against:

*When I describe paths
We lose the way.
When I speak of warmth
We become cool.
When I capture moments
they escape.
When I explain our lives
we wither.
When I prescribe relationships
we grow apart.*

*When we reach out
we grow together
When we perceive
we see together
When we aspire
we become.*

I suppose, CC, that my belief is in the implicit meaningfulness of my life directly through the quality of relationships which enable others to craft their own meanings. And because of you, here I am presenting the final

Part of a thesis and claiming that the form and content of this section are the most authentic and aesthetically appropriate expressions of my educational values that I think have ever achieved in writing. Without your letter and the values of trust, care and enquiry which underpin it, I do not think I could have understood and explained some of my most deeply felt values. For to be realised they need to be living. This relates, as you've read in Part One, to formative experiences in my life which have been at least partially responsible for my formulation of a connection between truth and care, or to be more honest, truth and love. To relate to you in this educative relationship in a way which has led to such authentic writing is the result of a search for a living development from meaning to significance. Have you not said something of the same?

We danced a duet, you and I, and I and you; and a trio, you and Jack and I; I, you and my students. Our audiences are not being prohibited from dancing on our stages. Many people have danced with Jack, as you said.- I am so honored to have a duet with you. There was only you and me for a while. Our dance is beautiful. Sometimes you are the dancer, I am the admirer, and sometimes you are my only audience, I the dancer. When the time comes, I will have to leave and to dance on my own stage. I will always be your faithful admirer and sincere critic as long as you reserve a ticket for me.

For me, CC, this quality you say that I have not shown sufficiently in the writing about the educative relationships I have with my students is probably because in the first place the word (I used it) 'equality' is not fully indicative of what I am meaning. In education I experience the greatest sense of a living aesthetic within those forms of human expression (the

morphology of my educative relationships) in which both care for individuals, (Peter's 'respect for persons') and a sense of moving the world to a better place are combined into a living epistemology of practice. For in such a synergetic combination resides, in my view, my understanding of the implicit and beautiful meaningfulness of my life. And of yours too. Of ours, CC.

'Don't withdraw your research to one side of the story. Educative relationship and aesthetic morphology are two-way. Tell me what you are now. I see Dr. Laidlaw in the writing and I want to see more than a Dr.'

And surely this should also answer your point in the letter. You appeal to my humanity, and quite rightly you have understood that it is not academic status I seek through this writing but a communication which expresses a deeply experienced humanity. A mutual humanity. You see, I believe that for me, I am drawn to an individually-orientated action research of the sort that both of us have been engaged in, because within it I can experience a living dialectic between my ontological and epistemological realities. In my educative relationships I experience the highest level of aesthetic value when there is a confluence between what I can know and what I can be. This experience of the aesthetic grounds my being, empowers my actions and enables me sometimes, on precious occasions, to enter the realities of others in ways which are not pre-designed but develop through respect, negotiated responsibilities and a belief in the inherent worthwhileness of being. Likewise, this aesthetic is not created at once, but grows, like Dewey's (1934) notion of medieval cathedral building, as our understanding and involvement within the relationship has grown. Fuller (1987) has written something which

resonates deeply within:

'the aesthetic dimension of human life extends across a wide-range of human activities; and we ought to regard it as an inalienable human potentiality, as fundamental as the capacity for language. If a society cannot provide a facilitating environment within which the aesthetic potential of all its members can find appropriate expression, then that society has failed.' (xi)

Although Fuller is writing specifically about aesthetic education and relating it to society as a whole, he clearly sees aesthetic appreciation as reaching beyond such barriers, as I do. He seems as well to regard it as one of the most profoundly human experiences. I concur because within such an experience and attempt to understand it have emerged for me the most meaningful networks and syntheses of disparate aspects of my own most profound humanity as they communicate with you, CC. To discover an aesthetic value within, for example, our educative relationship is to see it as a profoundly human and therefore meaningful activity. I believe that our educative relationship and that the writing (yours and mine) both explain and constitute an achievement in embodying something which Abbs (1987), drawing on Fuller, concludes:

'all things are defined in some way dialectically,' (p.12/13)

A colleague, Peter Mellett, who is beginning to write up his M.Ed. dissertation read the part of the thesis about my work with Sarah and pointed out:

'You write: 'I...my,' not 'I...our.' I understand this as meaning that you are an 'I' giving an account of 'we'. Are you inside or outside the relationship when writing?' (private letter)

I believe there is a significance in becoming more comfortable about using 'we' rather than 'I' in education. This pathway from 'I' to 'we' is highly meaningful in education for within it is contained our negotiation of our human realities as we struggle to improve and communicate our understanding of what is meaningful in our lives. A synthesis, then, of a question I posed at the beginning of this Part:

'How can I show within this thesis and in my practice, the necessity of viewing aesthetics and ethics as aspects of each other?'

For if it is educational, then, as explained before, all decisions and actions are value-laden and therefore ethical considerations. In addition my first question at the beginning of Part Two:

'How can I know that I am performing [an appropriate] art of living in ways which follow from the nature of life in general and human existence in particular?'

seems to me now to be close to being answered when, in Fromm's (1980) terms:

'the nature of all life is to preserve and affirm its own existence'. (p.19)

I am prepared to say 'in Fromm's terms' because I believe now understand,

having gone through the educational processes both in practice and in the writing, exactly what is significant about preserving and affirming my own existence and the existence of others. In particular, CC in relation to you. I change it to:

'the nature of my life is to preserve and affirm my own existence,'

given that I have chosen to affirm my own existence by affirming others'.

This journey that you have seen in the writing from beginning to end seems to be characterised by my coming to understand what is the significance of my affirming the existence of others, how it can happen within my educative relationships, and what it means for me to show this in a written form. This spans from the time when I first went public with my work about Zac and I realised that in fact I was not characterising his and my educative relationship, but finding what values motivated my work in education; through the moments of confusion with Justine as to what responsibility in my educative relationship with her really signified; in my earlier work with you in which trying very hard to enter your reality enabled me to recognise what respect in action within an educative relationship could look like; in my work with Sarah and Nigel and other PGCE students, (but particularly with Sarah) my gradual understanding of the interrelationships of all aspects of an individually-orientated action enquiry to the meanings which could emerge; and finally to our later collaboration in which you drew out of me the understanding of the power of mutuality within our educative relationship: the power to affirm our existences as people striving to understand our realities in order to improve them for ourselves and others. All this seems to me to be what

has happened. It has been the richest journey of my life and I am glad that you were there to share it with me.

With love, CC, and heartfelt gratitude,
Moirra, XXX

Epilogue to Part Two.

My Ethics: A Question of Responsibility, Meaning and Awe

'Oh shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick', quoth he, 'I bid thee say -
What manner of man art thou?'

July, 1996. As I state in the Introduction, explore in Part One and develop in the rest of the thesis, I am increasingly perceiving the ethical in my educational processes to be concerned with finding out how to live through the consideration of moral issues. Gadamer (1985) writes:

'Aristotle [shows] that the basis of moral knowledge...is...striving and its development into a fixed attitude is ...ethics.' (p.279)

Although a 'fixed' attitude suggests something too static for my own sense of the development of my values, which I will explain later in this Epilogue, it suggests the development of moral knowledge into something conscious. I wish to be consciously harnessing my moral values in the pursuit of improvements in the learning processes with my students and pupils.

In order to clarify the ethical dimension of my educational practice, I want to examine some of the moral values in 'The Ancient Mariner'. I am doing this for two reasons. First it will help to illuminate some of my own moral values. Secondly, it will make it easier for me to show how I develop the moral values underlying my educational practice into the 'fixed attitude' (see above) or ethics of my practice. Later on I will evaluate the ethical dimensions within Part Two of this thesis both with reference to my educational development as evidenced by The General Prologue

and in response to some of the comments of my external examiners. As in the Epilogue to Part One, this evaluation will not be exhaustive but representative of my educational development and the creation of my own living educational theory.

In these Epilogues I will be interpreting the poem's text largely according to my own insights, rather than gleaning them from other sources. The exception to this is in the explanation of some of the relationships for which I am indebted to Martin Buber's work (1923), although he was not writing in reference to the poem. My analysis of the poem needs to be largely personal because it is in the nature of my own responses to the poem that I am discovering meanings which illuminate the ethical and ontological dimensions of my own educational development. In the Epilogue to Part Three I will go into more detail about the ontological dimension of my educational development and in the Epilogue to Part Four I will discuss the knowledge-base of the poem as redolent of my own in this thesis.

I chose the poetic quotation which heads this Epilogue to illustrate my perception that even towards the end of his dilemma the Ancient Mariner is still looking to others to absolve his guilt. In other words he seeks to unburden himself of an appropriate responsibility. He has killed the albatross probably out of a lack of self-knowledge; he is, after all, '*plagued by fiends*'. Then, through the agency of the supernatural, he experiences what it means to be brought face-to-face with the consequences of his actions: all his shipmates are killed and for seven days the ship moves on without human intervention during which the bodies of the men remain intact, staring at the Mariner. However, the Mariner is now more alone

than if his comrades had not been there at all. He has become disconnected from the universe through his killing of the albatross and this universe is a morally active one: it is not Newton's dead or neutral universe at all but one in which good and evil are actively pursued. Goodness is perceived as being in a dialectical relationship to different conscious moral choices. The ultimate balance sought is not between good and evil which suggests neutrality. The universe which the Mariner seeks to inhabit towards the end is one in which the striving for balance is between individual and collective responsibilities that enable each individual to aspire towards their greatest potential as a human being. Through the murder of the albatross, the balance of the universe has been disturbed. The killing of the men and the Mariner's subsequent atonement are a balancing response to the enormity of his evil in killing the albatross *'hailed in God's name'*.

The other mariners' guilt is comprised from their moral vacillation and emptiness. At first they deride the Mariner for his act because they believe the bird brought the 'good south wind'. Then, almost immediately, they change their minds because the ship is plagued with fog and mist. Both of these acts are perceived by the Good Spirits as signs of moral decay because they stem from a lack of understanding about the ways in which individuals are connected in this universe and their positions of responsibility within it. At no time do the sailors upbraid the Mariner for simply killing the bird itself. It is as if the bird only has use-value to them, and no value within and for itself. It is only a thing to them. Buber (1923) calls this failure to recognise the reality of others a manifestation of the I-It relationship in which the other exists only as an object within one's own designs. He believes the most mature form of relationship to be an I-Thou one which is characterised by a capacity to feel that the other is divine and

beloved, and in no way a projection. The seamen also fail to establish an I-You (Buber, 1923) relationship with the Mariner which denotes the capacity to recognise the other as other and yet no less in reality and value than the perceiver.

However, the bird was hailed as a Christian spirit, symbolising something numinous, something beyond even the normal value of human life. This bird requires a relationship with people who have the capacity to recognise forces beyond and above their individual control. This way of relating would be felt as awe by the mariners. None of them has that capacity. Although they hail the bird in God's name it appears to be an empty ritual, a reality which does not ennoble them because they feel no genuine awe. In this morally-decisive universe their denial of so many levels of value is punishable by death. They die without knowledge. The Mariner's knowledge is borne out of their deaths and the meanings of those deaths. It is also, paradoxically, borne out of his growing realisation about the complex beauty of the bird's connection to Being itself. His knowledge arises from his gradual acceptance of the responsibility he has in severing the links between responsibility, meaning and awe. It also arises from his failure to evolve to higher forms of connectedness with others than the I-It relationship. This is more than a simple moral failure, it is an ethical one, because he does not formulate his moral insights into forms and structures through which he can lead a better life.

I infer from the poet here, that each individual is responsible for devising their own framework and that the failure to do so is morally culpable. This is something I agree with as an educator: that it is part of my role to evolve forms and structures which enhance the moral basis of my

teaching. This is the ethical dimension of the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships.

Before the Mariner kills the albatross (and perhaps the reason for the murder) he is in awe of nothing. Nothing evokes awe in him, either about his own or others' existences. Nothing intrinsically matters. Thus, as part of the proof of his learning, as well as to recount authentically, he must weave meaning with the responsibility he can now infer from it in a way which evokes awe in the listener in a similar way that he has discovered the capacity for awe within himself. This capacity for awe is first discovered in his aesthetic experience with the water snakes. He stops seeing them as things (just as the other mariners earlier regarded the albatross as a 'thing' with mere use-value) and perceives them at last as beautiful within and for themselves. He has stopped perceiving everything in relation only to his own unconscious needs and is able to expand his consciousness to include the unique worth of others. It is only at the very end of the poem that he recognises the true worth of others and through his development of a capacity to experience awe in his relationship to the whole universe, becomes capable of understanding and then articulating the gravity of what he has done.

His fate - to recount his story throughout eternity to anyone who will benefit from it - seems apposite from various points of view in terms of illuminating his reality and the poet's philosophy. The narrative enables the Mariner to relive and thus strengthen his understanding about the enormity of what he did and his resolve never to act in such a way again. His retelling is each time a purification of his growing awareness of his ethical responsibilities. It was in the very early drafting of *The General*

Prologue that I deepened my understanding of the ramifications for my own practice of treating individuals fairly. Griffiths and Davies (1995) write about what it means to treat children in a just manner:

'Processes of fairness need to be emphasised...its value depend[s] on the children believing that their perspectives and opinions matter[...]. Children are well able to recognise when there is merely a pretence of consultation.' (p.34)

When I recognised that I was probably showing favouritism to Rebecca over Zoë, it was this failure of my recognition of Zoë as fully real in her own right, of her intrinsic value as Zoë and not as a deficient substitute for Rebecca, that finally convinced me of the necessity of changing the way I was relating to her and others:

I had to let go of ideas about my own worldview and see what it might mean to be Zoë in that situation. The implications of that I now find salutary: it is not for me to confuse particular abilities with human value. This was becoming a new, living, insight for me as opposed to being the rhetoric of my educational theory. I was certain in my own mind of my equality of regard for both of the girls and yet it seemed that my actions were allowing one girl to feel slighted. (The General Prologue, p.18)

I began to relate ethically to Zoë, and I believe this was partly because of the way I had tried previously to behave more morally with Rebecca:

'Perhaps I should stop judging her as an eleven year old child and judge her by her own criteria. Judge her as Rebecca. There's something here to do with trust. I have to trust her to be a competent judge of her own abilities. Is this just because she is so clever in a way I value?...Perhaps here the ipsative criterion is the most significant one

in terms of our own educational development. Balanced with this, however, must be the sense as well that Rebecca is only one of many, not more significant because of her particular gifts. I need to stress carefully here her own role as a learning partner with Hannah and to encourage her to work with others...It is a matter of balance.’ (p.11)

At this point in my teaching of Rebecca, however, these were early days. I had not yet been confronted by Zoë and the reflections above are moral rather than ethical, because there is no explanatory power in them which reaches beyond the individual. I had not acted on my moral insight. I believe that articulating the ethics of my educational practice must embody an explanation of an improvement in the quality of learning for as many learners as possible.

My understanding of the failure to recognise Zoë’s individual needs and entitlement to my equal regard was a strong part of my motivation to reconstruct my Ph.D. through the Ancient Mariner story as you can see in The General Prologue, the Prologues and Epilogues to each Part. The story I am telling you here is a moral one and, like the Mariner, I will continue to tell it until I have fully understood its meanings within my own educational development and can perceive it gradually as more of an ethical tale. It is part of the developmental nature of the creation of my own living educational theory that I will continue to explore the ethical dimension of my enquiry. I do not believe that I will ever be able to write a list of ethical values in which the life and meaning of my educational development can be wholly contained. It seems to me that it is in the moral striving that the ethical will be distilled, however, and that the ethical is a framework within which I might learn to act wisely - in the name of education.

The Mariner's narrative is didactic and underlines the moral basis of the poem's philosophy - that we live in a morally active universe in which we play a role for good or evil and that this act is ultimately a choice we make. As an educator I do not act as if I live in a morally neutral universe. I do not believe it is right for me to do so. Being an educator means I assume that Life has purpose and meaning and that there are parameters we can develop collaboratively within which individuals and groups can live happily. I believe that my purpose as an educator is to further the assumption of the meaningfulness of Life both for myself and for the people I teach. I believe that I am doing this through an increasing clarity in my communication about where the various responsibilities for the processes lie. In other words within the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships I am placing a growing value on making our individual and collective responsibilities transparent. Later in this Epilogue I will go into detail about the responsibilities incurred by myself and CC in our educative relationship and what that means in terms of the ownership of the story I am telling in this thesis.

The Mariner is forced to tell his tale, one in which he may not prevaricate and show himself simply in a good light. He must uncover his 'fiends' and show what they mean - in other words, how they impact on the world. Whitehead (1989b) calls this division between actions and values a living contradiction, a hiatus I now find useful to think about as an aesthetic imbalance. (See Epilogue One for further discussion on this point.) Such a way of thinking enables me to be alert to the ethics and ontology in my own practice and in the creation of my own knowledge.

The Ancient Mariner must release himself from his inner tension by embracing the reality of others with respect and love and so tap into his capacity for awe. He must perceive their reality as fully equal or even superior to his own and yet recognise the limited nature of his own ability to narrate their reality. He can value the reality of others in his own narrative but he cannot speak for those others. So, in his story he speaks for himself and on behalf of himself and takes responsibility for the story he tells. In fact, his story is a testament to his acceptance of an appropriate responsibility for himself. It is the principal reason he has to re-tell his tale. Through it he is bound to others because they are human too and more simply than that, they are alive and thus of intrinsic worth, just as the water snakes are worthy of respect and even awe. He must learn when to intervene and when not to. He says towards the end:

*'That moment that his face I see
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.'*

This is his morality now - life is a continual process of enhancing the insights which lead to the appropriate adoption of personal responsibility in actions with others. Furthermore he has incurred the responsibility of becoming a role-model. By telling the story he must relive and demonstrate, time after time, the dangers of disconnection from the responsibilities of being human. He comes to understand that living out the responsibilities to himself and others in ways which his conscience now dictates, are themselves how he is connected to Being and constitute the morphology of his developing human relationships.

The above are metaphors for my own educational conclusions - that I must with my students and pupils acquire the insights which lead to all of us adopting the appropriate responsibilities. In addition I must learn how to tell my own tale in such a way that it illuminates the moral basis of my educational practice. I too must show the children, not only tell them, as I must show you in this thesis not simply tell you. I am also connected to my girls through the developing responsibilities I incur with them as an educator and through the ways we communicate them to each other. This responsibility breathes the emergent form and structure (morphology) into my educative relationships with learners. It is in the appropriate adoption of my responsibilities with them that I develop forms through which I can communicate with them about when, where and with whom the responsibilities lie. Carroll (1996) goes further when he writes:

'Failure to elicit the right moral response is a failure in the design of the work and therefore is an aesthetic failure,' (p.233)

a point I made in the Epilogue to Part One. This insight gives voice to the heart of this thesis. I believe that my practice is rendered educational through the degree to which the emergent forms and structures which I develop with learners enable an improvement in the quality of learning. I perceive a balance between what I teach and how I teach it that in this thesis I am explaining as an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. In this process I strive with pupils and students for a balance between the ethics and ontology, and the knowledge which arises from such a synthesis (the aesthetic) as together we seek to improve the quality of learning. Because my research has increased my perception that there is an educational dialectic between what I teach and how I teach it, then to

evolve a developmental morphology which can communicate the moral basis of the educational process is itself a necessary parameter of improvement. I would further claim that it is in the balance achievable between the two - the aesthetic and the morphological - as well as the balance within the aesthetic itself (as I explained in the Epilogue to Part One) - which augurs improvement in my educational processes. I would claim that the closer the connection between the morphology and the ethics, the more educative the process. Later on in this Epilogue I will relate these comments to my work with CC Lin in Part Two in which both the ethics and morphology of our educative relationship showed weaknesses.

All the above might give the impression that I am certain about my values and the morphology within my educational processes. I am not, but in Richard Pring's (1994) words, I must act at times: '*with confidence in my uncertainty*' (p.1), for the forms and structures which emerge in my educative relationships are not finished and neither are the values to which they give voice. All of them will remain unfinished. The morphology and values are developmental. It is only within an understanding of the immanent dialectic - in which values only emerge in practice over time - that the reality of my own educational development, the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships and my own living educational theory will be truly understood. (I will endeavour to make this more explicit in the Epilogue to Part Four.) It is also the developmental aspects of the processes I am involved in with others that make it rational for me to evolve developmental educational standards of judgement when evaluating the quality of learning and this thesis as a theoretical representation of aspects of the processes my pupils,

students and I are involved in. In developing educational standards of judgement with learners I also bring close together the connections between the morphology and the ethics of my practice. The improvements the girls, for example, seek in their understanding about English, through their action planning (see Part Four of this thesis for greater detail about action planning in the classroom) are embodied within the processes of teaching and learning themselves. They become inseparable:

'I believe that encouraging the girls to integrate their learning about the curriculum aspects of my teaching responsibilities with ways in which we can evaluate our own learning will serve this purpose...I want us to be able to judge our own work, not by criteria which are disconnected from others' sense of worth and purpose, but are sufficiently our own to render them personally true and meaningful, giving us as individuals and as a group, something we can build on and points from which we can judge how far we have come. I want us all to be able to stand and tell our own stories of our own lives, not as the Ancient Mariner does as a punishment, but as a process of self-empowerment. It seems to me that developing our own educational standards of judgement, both as individuals and as members of a group, will help in this process, and that the poem can give us all clues about the worthwhileness of such an undertaking. I want each one of us to become the helmsman steering through the ice.'

(The General Prologue, p.27)

The developmental aspects of my practice help to work against any personal assumption that I have the 'right' answers, or that my moral values are the 'right' ones. I agree, rather, with Pring again when he says:

'the authority of the teacher lies in helping the young learner to make sense of - to make personal and thus go beyond - that impersonal world...The expertise of the teacher lies in helping

*the search for truth rather than its transmission. And why?
Because although there are true accounts of that real world, no one
can be certain what they are.'* (p.12)

I believe that what I am able to do with children is to enable them to understand more about their own place in the scheme of things through the curricular work. I wish them to search for personal fulfilment within a context which values others too but I do not see this as an easy or quickly achievable process, or even that it should be either. Pring says about this very issue:

'[The] search for personal fulfilment is often itself a struggle, requiring self-denial and effort, deliberation and self-criticism, [and this] implies, indeed entails standards, not of one's own making, against which the young person judges his own performance and criticises his own aspirations. And such self-criticism and search contradicts the idea that the personal enquiry dwells solely in the realm of subjective meanings or relative values.' (p.13)

As an educator I believe that promoting personal fulfilment is only ethical when it is not separable from the responsibilities to oneself and others. Through the reflections on the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships I seek to find forms which channel the moral responsibilities which each individual has within the educational process in order to improve the quality of learning. This is not something I do simply for others, but a process within which I too am deeply implicated. This thesis is a testament to my implication within the processes for which I have the

responsibility.

'The Ancient Mariner' is such an effective tool for me in the classroom because it acts as a form through which I can open up communication about issues to do with responsibility as well as being a beautifully constructed poem. With this poem I have discovered something which is both aesthetic and morphological. As I wrote in The General Prologue:

'Time after time I choose to read this poem with young people because it seems to encapsulate everything I believe in in terms of a moral universe at whose centre there is meaning, not chaos, in which people have to take responsibility for their own actions, and in which goodness and evil exist as embodied realities, not abstractions. Such qualities in the poem enable us to deliberate about what matters in human existence...I believe that one of my roles as an educator is to enable young people to make informed and empowered choices about their own destinies. Although at times things may happen to them in their lives over which they have little control, I believe we have to be in a position to deal with fate and the moral issues which surround ways we have of making meanings out of our lives.' (p.3/4)

In addition I wondered:

'how much of Rebecca's situation is my responsibility. That question again. How much is down to me, and how much is someone else's responsibility?' (p.23)

The acquisition of insights about the placing of responsibility does not strike me as being a discrete process, in which a decision about one situation and person will determine all situations and all people. Striving towards such an unobtainable ideal, is, however, an ethical endeavour. I am claiming in this thesis that the quality of choices I make about such

decisions of responsibility, and the way I then negotiate those with others, as well as the way I choose to represent this process, are characteristic of my educational development. I am aware that in the claim above I have placed 'taking a decision' before 'negotiating with others'. As an educator, as much as I care about negotiation with other learners (Laidlaw, 1994b), I believe I hold a unique position within the learning process with my students and pupils, such that there is an area of my practice which is not negotiable with them. I have responsibilities which they don't have. For example, in the classroom with the girls I am responsible for teaching English. I also agree with the recent Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (1996) document which states:

'Young people are not automatically aware of moral values. Through discussing moral issues, young people come to understand the criteria for making moral judgements and how attitudes are formed.' (p. 12)

The document also explains that:

'Plans for moral development should not be limited to knowledge of right and wrong, but should seek to affect behaviour.' (p.10)

I am also not working in isolation and as Pring (1994) says:

'It is in the community of educated persons - whether that be the classroom, the school, the university, or the links established with previous generations through literature and art and history - that the personal search for meaning is fostered through access to the

impersonal representations of what others have done and said.'

(p.14)

My practice is the result of research, context, curriculum as well as the individual educative relationships I develop with each learner. I am finding that problematising the dialectic between curriculum and ethical values is increasingly my preferred way of structuring the learning process in order to improve its quality. Thus in the classroom I now consciously seek to educate on two specific levels: the curricular and the ethical. In terms of my own educational practice, I perceive acting ethically to be that which is in accordance with a set of moral principles which enables the learners to improve the quality of learning about the curricular subject (with the pupils it is English, and with the Initial Teacher Education students it was pedagogy) and their responsibilities within the learning process. The School Curriculum And Assessment (SCAA) document (1996) says about the processes of coming to share responsibility in the classroom:

'in learning to handle responsibility, young people should be partners with adults in decision making. Responsibility and discipline should be inseparable.' (p.12)

How I come to conclusions about the ownership of responsibility and then put this into action with my students and pupils in the process of my teacher-research, and later create out of it all my own living educational theory - these constitute my educational development.

Richardson (1991), however, says that contemporary educational research

is full of:

'doubt that any discourse has a privileged place, any method or theory a universal and general claim to authoritative knowledge.'

(p.173)

While I accept this at the macro level, I think that I am in a position to know my own practice and to be authoritative about my own knowledge through the process of this educational research. Similarly in the classroom, I cannot have the attitude that 'anything goes'. When I taught 'The Ancient Mariner' I was as concerned to enable the girls to experience the reality of what it meant to be making moral choices to them as individuals and to all of us as a group, as I was to teach them about the choices the Mariner was making and the ways in which the poet depicted his struggles. Although I do not know all the answers, I have a responsibility to seek understanding of the processes which are likely to help young people to learn what it means to make responsible choices as they improve their understanding about English. This is what my current teacher-research is for!

This thesis seeks to be a testament to the authority of my own knowledge and it is this claim to such authority which constitutes my own living educational theory. This 'authority of my own knowledge', like the educational standards of judgement I evolve with others in order to judge it, is not static. Similarly, like the ethics of my practice, it is developmental. I increasingly draw my educational knowledge about my practice from the dialectic between curriculum and the moral processes through which the curriculum can be understood. This connection between the moral and

the curricular is itself in dialectical relationship to the claims I can subsequently make about that connection in the creation of my own living educational theory. It is **living** because the dialectical relationships are never-ending and self-generating. It is **educational** because they expose the moral issues in such a way that they can be understood through the processes of improving curricular learning whilst leading to more ethical relationships. This text constitutes my own **theory** because it makes claims to have explained the ways in which my educational processes work. I will discuss the significance of the authority of my own knowledge through my claim to be creating my own living educational theory in more detail in Part Four.

When I had completed Part One of the thesis, however, I was dissatisfied because:

'I was filled with the void of disappointment...I have been aware of a sense of deficiency in an explanation about the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. And within this aspect of judgement resides, in my own educational development, an ontological as well as a confluence of my educational knowledge.'

(p.296)

Grand words! And nowhere anything to do with the ethical. When I wrote Part Two I was aware that one of my motives in sharing my work with CC was seeking to liberate her from the constraints she felt in the attempting to be true to herself in an environment which she experienced as inimical to her sense of self. She expressed it (Lin, 1993) thus in her Masters dissertation:

'The story is presented in a metaphorical structure to display how the writer has struggled to find a form of education which does not violate an individual's humanity.' (p.1)

Elsewhere in the thesis, for example in enabling Sarah (Part One) to speak with her own voice about issues which concerned her, and in The General Prologue, particularly with Zoë, I highlight such an activity as ethical. However, in Part Two I did not explain the ethical significance of establishing a beneficial dialectic between collaborative and individual enquiries. In the external examiners report it was pointed out that:

'When CC Lin challenges your account, you publish the challenge and your reply, and address her...saying that you hope that this demonstrates your acceptance of her point. Is this thesis now approaching greater aesthetic harmony and balance through the embracing of your own voice as separate and equal? How can she respond? How can we respond? Can we/she say to you, 'No it isn't...'?'

Another comment was expressed thus:

'Surely the bits of 'voice' you use are collected for your purpose even if in verbatim form for that bit. You must make a selection ...and to make a selection is an exercise of voice (and power)...If Sarah, or CC, or Claire wrote a bit of the Ph.D....for their purposes, maybe that would be their voice, but why should they?'

In the light of the ideas so far in this Epilogue, I would like to examine the above comments and show how I now understand better their ethical implications.

There is an imbalance in Part Two which asks questions of someone who cannot answer. Indeed this is a manifestation of my own living contradiction, essentially an aesthetic imbalance, because I expressed a respect for individual voices but didn't represent it sufficiently. My failure to do so was both ethical and aesthetic. It was ethical because I had not properly understood the moral basis of my educational practice in making the necessary connections between respecting individuals and representing their voices in a way which would have enhanced the quality of learning. In other words a moral awareness is not enough. It needs to be part of an approach to the whole learning process. It means expanding the individual moral perception into a way of working. It means developing an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships in which all the aspects within the aesthetic are appropriately balanced. I had not taken all those steps as an educator.

My failure in Part Two was an aesthetic one in the sense that there was an imbalance between the rhetoric and the reality. I had not held together the ethical, the ontological and the emerging knowledge in a balanced way. I had isolated one part of the process from the other, and in my own educational practice the aesthetic requires meaningful connections which enhance the quality of learning, not diminish it. In my representation of my educational development with CC, the ethical dimension was not sufficiently in evidence. The ethical was not transparent enough.

As it happens, CC did respond to certain issues I raised in Part Two in her dissertation:

'She takes my letter seriously. Through the way she shows her respect to her students they can become her educational colleagues. There is a power within each individual radiating through an educative relationship.' (p.89)

However, my quoting of that now does not necessarily imply that I had originally taken CC's voice seriously enough (otherwise I would have quoted it in the original thesis). I believe I tried to take CC seriously, but I was not aware that this entailed making that transparent in the text as well. This brings me back to a point I made in the Epilogue to Part One in my discussion of various aspects of The General Prologue about why I now collect more data than I used to. The process itself of collecting data on and with individuals and being prepared to account for it I have found to be a remarkably efficient way of improving the educational quality of the processes (Laidlaw, 1994d).

The issues of ownership and voice touched on by these questions are fundamental to my educational processes which aim to improve the quality of learning. Both ownership and voice impinge upon responsibility. As this is my Ph.D. and not anyone's whose voice appears within it, then I have to be, like the Mariner in recounting his tale, infinitely careful with how I represent those voices. This is one of the reasons, as I already explained in the Epilogue to Part One, why in The General Prologue I chose not only to write about Zoë in detail as well as Rebecca, but consciously began to try to find other interpretations of our

educative relationship:

I am also perceiving in these words how important it is for my own educational development to recognise the emphasis I should place on living out my values more fully in my actions with pupils in the classroom rather than simply engaging in elegant descriptions of those values. (p.20)

I also wrote:

I was certain in my own mind of my equality of regard for both of the girls and yet it seemed that my actions were allowing one girl to feel slighted.(p.18)

And about Rebecca I write this in a tone more speculative than usual:

I had opened up to her previously the opportunities to her to take risks with her creativity, and whether or not she was responding directly to my explicit encouragement, something in the situation was enabling her to be adventurous. Perhaps she was simply enjoying the exploration. (N.B. In the New Year, 1996, I asked her specifically why she had chosen to work in that way. *'I like working in my own way and you encourage us to work in ways that suit us. If I like something I just want to write and write.'*) (p.16)

Seeking other interpretations is also an ethical issue in relation to owning one's own knowledge. It is only in the time since reading 'The Ancient Mariner' with the group of Year Seven pupils that I have come to perceive the importance of the links between voice and ownership. If I interpret everything, then I take away the individual's right to speak on their own behalf about issues which concern them. On the other hand, in my story of my own educational development I have to take the ultimate

responsibility for my own meanings as I search for ways of representing my own living educational theory. This is why in these Prologues and Epilogues I am drawing more on my own voice because I am becoming more aware of it. As this happens I am sensing more of the relationship my 'emerging I' (Evans, 1995: 232) has with personal responsibility and meaning. The choice to write these Epilogues in this way, separate from the main text and yet seeking to integrate it, stems from the desire to render the thesis more of an answer to the question: **How can I create my own living educational theory as I offer you an account of my educational development?** As my own voice emerges, and I take responsibility for the ownership of the text, in particular through the Prologues, Epilogues and The General Prologue, I seek to communicate my meanings more authentically and clearly.

It seems to me now that questions of voice and ownership constitute a useful dialectic within which issues leading to questions of trustworthiness (Kincheloe, 1991: 135) become inevitable. Seeking trustworthiness in this text is an ethical issue for me because becoming trustworthy is a matter of articulating my own concerns and worldview in ways which enable others to identify with them as having value. (I will write about this criterion of trustworthiness in detail in the Epilogue to Part Four.) If I am espousing educational values to do with the appropriation of responsibility, then enabling others to identify with these values as being worthwhile I see as an ethical endeavour. In my rhetorical questions to CC I gave her no opportunity to reply within the text (which would have lent it more aesthetic verisimilitude) and you the reader no way of telling whether the conclusions I was implying about greater aesthetic balance within the thesis were valid or not.

In conclusion to this Epilogue I would like to draw out the significance of the title: 'My Ethics: A Question of Responsibility, Meaning and Awe.' I have written much about responsibility in this Epilogue and less about meaning and awe. This is because I believe that in my own educational processes, appropriating responsibility is the ethic, and meaning and awe its ultimate aim. Let me explain this, again through the metaphor of 'The Ancient Mariner'. When he has killed the albatross, even the elements reflect back to him his evil:

*'Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad can be;*

And later:

*'The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.'*

Death then becomes personified and wrecks terrible vengeance through the agency of his mate, Life-in-Death who wins the Mariner in a game of dice. The Ancient Mariner is so far removed from any sense of meaning and awe, so disconnected in his view of reality, that he does not take responsibility for his present predicament. He does not perceive any connection between such an adoption of personal responsibility and the meaning and awe he could derive from his own existence. Neither do the other sailors. This is why their existence is essentially meaningless. Their

failure to take responsibility determines their fate. The Ancient Mariner continues in his living death:

*'Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.'*

At this stage he is still waiting for others to intervene on his behalf. Until he perceives the water snakes by moonlight (a symbol of hope and goodness in the poem) he remains stuck at a lower stage of development. At the I-It stage (Buber, 1923) in other words. In order to evolve towards the I-You and then the I-Thou stages, he must first reach an understanding of his responsibility for what he has done. It is through an understanding of his responsibility to others and to himself that he comes to understand his relationship to himself and to the rest of creation. His blessing of the water snakes as a result of the love he feels for them - a state evoked through his perception of their beauty, their separateness from him, and their intrinsic value - is when he begins to adopt responsibility for the acts he commits.

In my educative relationships I too have had to learn what it means to accept responsibility:

'I am the adult in the situation, I must bear a great deal of the responsibility for what is happening. However, I must not bear it all because that deprives the girls of becoming responsible for their own behaviour. (The General Prologue, p.20)

I then ask myself questions about how I can put into practice my growing sense of responsibility:

How do I continue to support Rebecca's exceptional talent as a writer, whilst nurturing Zoë's creativity and sensitivity, Chloë's usual kindness to others and her empathy for those less creative than her, and Lisa's formidable originality? How can I help the girls to internalise the ipsative criterion when it comes to them judging their own work? This is not just about setting arbitrary standards linguistically, it's about helping the girls to find more appropriate ways of relating to themselves and each other.' (p.21)

And then the beginnings of a solution:

I decided, after talking to the girls quietly outside the classroom in a cosy corner, to tackle it head on. I knew that if I did that I was liable to unearth some uncomfortable issues but felt that it was a matter of fairness. I stopped the lesson fifteen minutes before the end and said that I was concerned that some girls didn't always seem to feel they were being treated fairly in my lessons. Did they trust me enough to talk about it? I felt it was really an important issue and I would value their opinions. (p.21)

I perceive the acceptance of responsibility in my educative relationships primarily to incur questions to do with appropriating responsibility. This doctoral resubmission is one of the forms that the acceptance of my own personal responsibility is taking as I seek to improve the connections between my assertions and the evidence for them. Another instance is the way in which I am attempting to make issues to do with responsibility more transparent with my pupils:

I felt it was important with the girls explicitly to encourage values to do with connectedness in our classroom. If they are brought only to see themselves as individuals without responsibility for others as well as themselves, then I do not believe

this is educational. (p.14)

My concerns with responsibility are becoming an increasingly significant morphological feature of my attempts to improve the learning processes with my pupils, of my own educational development and the creation of my living educational theory, for I perceive with Kearney (1984) that:

'as soon as I acknowledge that it is 'I' who is responsible, I accept that my freedom is anteceded by an obligation to the other.' (p.31)

And by implication when it becomes clear through our educational processes that the pupil is responsible then she can learn what it means to own that responsibility fully.

So what now of meaning and awe? If I am saying that the adoption of an appropriate responsibility is central to my own understanding of educational development and a significant feature of the use-value within the development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships, then in what way are meaning and awe connected to responsibility in these regards? Again I turn to *The Ancient Mariner* for clarification. Towards the end of the poem, the Mariner is still waiting for others to reward him for his progress:

*'He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The albatross's blood.'*

The Hermit, a holy man, does not respond in the way I, or I suspect, the Mariner, had expected:

*"Say quick!" quoth he, 'I bid thee say -
What manner of man art thou?'*

And then:

*'Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.'*

The Mariner is entirely thrown back on his own resources and left to conclude the meaning of life himself. This is harsh and yet through it he comes to understand something of his own place in the scheme of things. He is able to enjoy his uniqueness amongst the uniqueness of others, but he stresses:

*"'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company.'*

In other words he stresses the joy of communicating with others (who are 'goodly') as together they do something worthwhile (walking to the church). This becomes the meaning of his life in the light of the tale he must recreate whenever he meets someone who will benefit from it.

I perceive this as a useful metaphor to describe my own sense of being in the world (which I will explain in more detail in the Epilogue to Part

Three). My own sense of being is also one in which I am becoming increasingly aware of my own responsibility for myself. However, as an educator I am involved with others in worthwhile activities for which I also have to try to understand who should do what. This is for me one of the greatest justifications for being a teacher-researcher as opposed to simply a teacher. Being a teacher-researcher enables me, amongst other things, to improve the ethical nature of the education for which I am responsible, particularly as I attempt to become accountable for that process as I am doing with this thesis. Just as the meaning of life for the Mariner is embodied in his daily habits and rituals, so my educational meanings are contained within the ways in which I try to improve the quality of the educative relationships I develop with my students and pupils.

And now to awe? This is not something I find easy to write. I do not have a formal religious faith and yet I often experience awe:

'I looked around at the girls and felt their beauty and I was filled with love for them. Yet again the poem had reminded me of what I feel to be of importance in my own existence, and enabled me to access those aspects of myself which speak directly to children and to myself. I know that what has happened this morning will always live with me. The poem came alive and during the reading I was reminded, as is the Mariner, about the reality of others. The girls seemed to become more real to me. The poem enabled me to recognise them afresh as individuals. Because of the power of this poem, I could recognise, as if for the first time, the beauty and loveliness of the girls as they responded.' (The General Prologue, p. 8/9)

Through aesthetic experience I can connect with aspects of reality which evoke awe in me. I believe this to be a very important experience because it enables me to perceive the reality of others, focuses me on what matters

in my own life and clarifies meanings. It is awe which can most effectively connect my feelings to my understanding. Without experiencing awe I would have a narrower ethical vision, less sense of an achievable balance between my own ontology and ethics and little perception that my knowledge means anything. Like the Mariner, I can only access this clarity that my life really matters, what I do in it is meaningful, and that I have something to tell others, through experiences which evoke awe.

**'...He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.**

**He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small...'**

Prologue to Part Three

'Oh happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unaware...'

July, 1996. 'The Ancient Mariner' does not do much in the poem. His first action is to kill the albatross and thus sever his connection to the rest of Creation. The poem makes it clear that in killing the albatross he has also violated himself. His first impulse to goodness is triggered by an aesthetic experience in which he feels his own connection to Being again. The power of love is intimately related in this poem to the powers of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. The Mariner can only feel love when he has sensed his own connection to himself and to others. The moral vacuum which enabled him to kill the albatross is only purged through his acceptance of the responsibility for his actions and is symbolised by the moment of his ability to love. Through this aesthetic experience he reaches an ontological acceptance of responsibility. In other words, the meaning of his life and his own self are only realised for him when he takes active steps in remaining connected to his own responsibility to himself and others.

In the account you are about to read, you will see me trying to make sense of connections between my ethical and ontological concerns. This is because I believe that Life is meaningful. I believe that being an individual amongst millions of other individuals means something significant. I have, like every other human being, encountered circumstances which have tested my belief in its meaningfulness. I have had many more which convince me that my life amongst these millions of others matters. I care

what I do in this life and I want to lead a full and productive existence. I believe in leading an examined life because through its examination I can lead a better life. I believe that taking responsibility for my own life is an inevitable conclusion of my own sense of what it means to be a human being amongst other human beings. The theory of my own being (my ontology) is intimately related to a theory of my ethical relationships with others and it is this connection - the ontology and ethics of my life - which gives rise to my chosen vocation - education.

The account you are about to read begins with an Introduction in which I sum up some of the learning that has occurred in the previous two Parts. I reiterate a list of criteria which I outlined in Part One by which I wanted to judge my own educational research writing. The main text is in three distinct sections, which are characterised through an educational journey characterised by what it means in the name of education to move from 'I' to 'you' to 'we'. Part Three charts the development of my own emerging educational values and within each of the sections I present a variety of approaches to understanding the whole through a series of what I term 'echoes'. These echoes are suggestive of the incomplete nature of my attempts to unify my ontological experience in a written representational form.

I have quoted the above lines from 'The Ancient Mariner' for a specific reason. In the main section of the account you are about to read, I offer you a description and explanation of an ontological experience of my own which inspired a work of fiction about a Utopian community. Through the use of extracts from my novel (Laidlaw, 1992b) I ground my enquiry in its values and show how I use my understanding to evaluate my own

educational development. My enquiry at this stage is conducted chiefly through written correspondence with Higher Education students at Bath University. A few of the conclusions I reach here are rendered through my own poetry.

I now find it illuminating to compare my own ontological experience and conclusions to the Mariner's situation in the above quotation: a theory of my own Being should be in connection to a more universal theory of Being. This section comes the closest yet in the thesis to exploring what it means for my own educational development and the creation of my own living educational theory, to explore the connections to be made between my own sense of self and its dialectical relationship to others as we seek to find in what ways and how far we are responsible for the processes we are involved in.

Throughout Part Three I am concerned to show how making connections between the ethical, ontological and aesthetic aspects of my own educational narrative, enables me to draw conclusions about my own educational knowledge and theory. I end Part Three with a series of intentions about my subsequent work in education in the light of my findings in that section.

The experimental nature of this Part enables me to explore meanings in the dialectic between the 'I' of my action research enquiry and its contexts, such that I am able to show a greater understanding about how my values are emerging in my practice over time. This is the most concentrated exploration in any Part of my own 'I'. What I have yet to do, however, is to explore the context sufficiently in the way in which I draw conclusions

about the educational value of what I am doing. I do this to a much greater degree in Part Four.

Introduction: Part Three⁴

November, 1993.

In the previous two parts of this thesis I have attempted to show you how I have come to judge the quality of my educative relationships through a standard of judgement I am terming an aesthetic morphology. I have tried to show through the form (morphology) in which the relationships with my students have been conducted (letters, informal and formal dialogue, seminars, and tutorials) how our analysis of the ethics and the meanings of our dialogues have grounded our practice in what we are claiming gives rise to our educational knowledge. In McNiff's (1993) sense:

'teachers become learners, in that they come to know themselves - they engage in their own personal process of education.' (p.49)

One of the aims of this section is to show that an understanding of the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships can, as I have claimed before in Part Two, actually enhance the quality of those educative relationships. It is not simply that I can judge the quality of the relationship through such a standard of judgement, but also that I can bring such an understanding to bear within an action research enquiry as I seek to improve the quality of learning. I wish to show, in other words, how my learning has contributed to my practice, and to my intentions in education.

Throughout the thesis I have been aware, however, that sometimes the forms in which I can communicate to you about my aesthetic

⁴I am grateful to my colleague, Dr. Alma Harris for her constructive criticisms on earlier drafts of Part Three.

understanding, have shrouded the very process of illumination which I seek to gain. Hubbard and Power (1993) state categorically:

'Some people believe that the benefits of teacher research and the knowledge gained from teacher-research are primarily for the teacher completing the research. We disagree. Teacher-research can enrich your professional life immeasurably. But learning for yourself isn't enough. If you have discovered something which can help other teachers work with their students, you have a professional obligation to share it.' (p.122)

As a revelation of the educational significance of an analysis of, and working with, an aesthetic morphology, lies at the heart of this thesis, I do not wish to deny the art of my own educational processes and insights. Ludeking (1988) clearly recognises this dilemma when he writes:

'Any attempt to state a particular normative criterion for the use of the concept of art will only have the result of prescribing an arbitrary application. It will not actually describe how the concept is actually applied...Conceptual analysis cannot in every case be able to tell us to which things a concept needs to be applied, because this is not always determined by the generally accepted rules of language alone.' (p.125)

Having completed the first two parts of this thesis I recognised that there was something missing. I wasn't exactly sure what it was, I simply knew that I had to wait until a synthesis of my intuitions, ideas and learning, had taken place. This final section of the thesis is the result of that tension. It is an attempt to draw together the strands from the earlier parts and to show the educational significance of what I think I have achieved with this work.

It is presented in an experimental form, because in order to be true to my insights I could not present it in a more traditional format. I have interspersed educational developments since Part Two was written, with extracts from a novel I wrote in 1992 after a visit to East Germany. I recognise that this represents a departure from most Ph.D. theses that I am acquainted with, and indeed from most educational research writing. There is, however, an increase in interest in fictional forms of representation as a means of conveying educational ideas at the moment. At the recent American Educational Research Association, in his Presidential Address, Eisner (1993) called for experimental forms of representation as a way of conveying more complex and intricate meanings, than, he claimed, are possible through more traditional avenues. He said:

'While envisioning such an integration of forms is difficult, it is the exploration of such possibilities, first imaginatively and then practically, that will enable us to invent an agenda for the future.' (p.10)

At the beginning of my section about my work with Sarah (Part One) I wrote about my requirements for educational writing, amongst which were these:

What do I want?

*** I want a presentation of educational ideas that does justice to my insight that there is a dialectic between knower and known that can be interpreted as creative and representative of educational meaning (Polanyi, 1958;**

Belenky, 1986; Greene, 1992).

*** I want a form of communication that confirms the healthily symbiotic nature of form and content (Woodfield, 1990; Saville, 1988).**

*** I want my students and I to explore our worlds in such ways that promote both autonomy for individuals and yet collaboration towards individual health and the creation of a good social order (Apple & Jungck, 1992; Henry, 1993).**

*** I want to embrace those descriptions and explanations of emancipatory action researchers who seek to improve their practice and the quality of learning (Carr and Kemmis, 1983).**

*** I want to reveal through my work my belief in the worthwhileness of humanity through their individual and collective aspirations towards goodness, truth and beauty (Socrates through Plato; Dewey, 1934).**

*** I want to reveal my knowledge that individual human beings and a good society are greater than the sum of their individual parts.**

I want a form of educational representation which does justice to my understanding that it is within a constant struggle to find with my students where the responsibility for the ethics of collaboration, democratic practices, social justice, goodness, truth, beauty, resides at any given moment in our discourse, that the aesthetic of such a relationship rests.

*** I want to take as ontologically and epistemologically meaningful, my**

experience that it is through the enhancement of democratic practices in educational establishments, that valuable learning can occur and be beneficial for individuals and for the contexts in which they live and work (Dewey, 1916, Laidlaw, 1994b).

*** I want to reveal through my work my respect for the individuality of humans and their potential to lead good and productive lives (Neill, 1977; Rogers, 1983; Kincheloe, 1991; ed. Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991).**

*** I believe that the above can help to move the world to a better place.**

I think through the writing of this Part of the thesis I will be showing a greater depth of educational significance within these words.

Stephen Rowland (1991) wrote:

'This paper represents an attempt to open up a new field of practitioner enquiry through the use of fictional writing...It is part of the process of facing and investigating this personal and professional dilemma. It also represents an attempt to explore the value of the method of fictional-critical writing.' (p.95)

Proliferation of forms is, Kemmis (1992) argues, almost to be expected in our postmodern world. Indeed, I have already mentioned in Part One, Lincoln's (1993) exposition of the uncertainty in the educational research world about truth, meaning and representation. Together with uncertainty about what counts as valid, there are also issues of verisimilitude which Woodfield (1990) alludes to when writing about the indivisibility of form

and content. He is referring to his editing of the papers from the eleventh International Congress in Aesthetics, 1988:

'We have not attempted to improve the style of th(e) papers for the very good reason that style and content are interconnected. Reworking the papers would have necessitated extensive philosophical discussions with their contributors.' (Preface)

I believe that my use of fiction within an educational narrative is an original one because I show that there is a meaningful connection to be drawn between my fictional writing and my educational values. Against the values in the fiction, I set my educational practice. I have always wanted to find a form of representation which would have some personal as well as educational validity as well as educationally, and in which I could secure for this Ph.D. an aesthetic unity. It is since writing Parts One and Two of this thesis that I am beginning to perceive a link between a theory of my own being, my ontology, educational knowledge, and aesthetics and that as an educator it is ethical to attempt to perceive how that link affects my practice. I believe that such an endeavour will enhance the quality of the educational insights which I am laying claim to as significant in this thesis. I also believe that I will become more able to articulate what is the link between ethics, ontology, educational knowledge and aesthetics, as this section of the thesis is written. I believe that it is important to become clearer as this Ph.D. aspires to be an original contribution to educational knowledge. In addition as an individually-orientated educational action researcher, I am committed to becoming accountable for my own knowledge within an educational framework. My personal knowledge is not at all compartmentalised and this section does seek to show the

significance of the unity as I express it within education. And as I have stated in Parts One and Two, I come to understand through living exploration within relationships, not within an inner, mental struggle to know. (See again Belenky et al, 1986.) I would also contend that an attempt to discover the nature of the link is educational in itself and will enhance the educational validity of this thesis.

A search for ontological authenticity, then, is, in Paskow's (1988) words:

'real in the sense of being an existent with certain definite characteristics. The more difficult question is whether it is possible to say that sometimes one of us apprehends in an ontologically significant way i.e. grasps what is most essential or fundamental to that being, bearing in mind at the same time our most deepest needs as human beings.' (p.152)

I find Paskow's words descriptive of my own concerns in this section. I am making a tentative claim that my ontological insights are significant for others, as my ontological reality is the one which I try to bring into education with my students and affects powerfully, the educative relationships which I am able to forge with others. Paskow's insights have enabled me to articulate why I feel that this section is vital, not only from the point of view of substantiating and drawing together insights from the previous parts of the thesis, according to notions of rigour (Winter, 1989; Kincheloe, 1991) and reliability and validity (Gitlin et al, 1993). However, it is in Paskow's next points that I find most with which to identify for this thesis, for my life in education and my existence as a whole. He outlines two principles which he would append to Heidegger's (1931) ascription for (ontologically) authentic people:

- '1) Each of the creatures of this world is not only complex matter responding solely to mechanical forces; each is also being attracted by something that lures or provokes it to its own self-development.*
- 2) Our task as humans is to serve and abet this ontological principle, both with respect to ourselves, other humans...' (p.153, my emphasis)*

This insight moves me deeply because I have been looking for months now for a way of expressing precisely that interconnectedness, as I perceive it, between a personal ontology and my own living educational theory. I perceive Paskow's statement:

'Our task as humans is to serve and abet this ontological principle, both with respect to ourselves, [and] other humans...'

as an educational one, because, as I hope I have made clear in Parts One and Two of this thesis, I perceive education as a medium through which people can be helped to lead good and productive lives through a process of self-development. Paskow goes on to write:

'Our task...is to see things from the point of view of a perfected self, one who has realised his or her best possibilities and one who will live on indefinitely (but not eternally). A totally perfected self is not the ideal because such a self would presumably care about nothing; thus I am positing a self who still needs to realise him or herself through identification with the unrealised capacities of others.' (p.154)

As an educator I believe that my task is to recognise those 'unrealised

capacities of others' and try to offer an environment and a quality of educative relationships which enable individuals to realise those capacities most suited to leading a good and productive life (as I explained in Part One of this thesis). I will again come back to this later in this final section.

I further believe that a synthesis between my ontology and educational knowledge gives rise to an aesthetic whose power and influence I hope to illustrate in this section. In Part Two of this thesis I believe that this synthesis was more implicit than explicit. I may have outlined that certain linking characteristics impact on my practice. I do not believe until this final section that I have been in a position to explicate the significance of such a link, or to see its aesthetic value. Paskow's notion of task (see above) has articulated for me a workable link between ontology and education. I believe that the theory of my own being is at the centre of any work I can do in education. I believe that my ontology is characterised by the desire to enable myself and others to lead full and productive lives, a claim I will be trying to substantiate and explain within Part Four.

As you may have already seen in my work with Sarah in Part One, I can also value the other by challenging her/him to reveal the best s/he has to offer. It is in this sense of 'task' again from Paskow, that it is partly my ontology which transmutes into my own living educational theory. I begin to perceive the notion of task as one of duty and responsibility. If my ontology rests very much upon a sense of duty to myself and others, then my educational practice and theorising would seem ideal ways for me to formalise my ontological reality. As an individual outside the formalising framework of education, it would be more difficult for me to realise my ontology fully in practice. Within educational processes I am enabled to do

that. It is perhaps this enablement which seals for me the vocational nature of my place in education. I perceive what I do in education as a calling, as a vocation. Therefore I will be attempting to show you in Part Three how I have set my ontology within an educational framework.

I am making a claim in Part Three, then, that my ontological understanding influences significantly my own living educational theory to the extent that one cannot be fully understood without the other. Indeed, it seems to me now that what was missing from the Child Out Of Time story (apart from the limitations already discussed in Part One) was precisely this lack of connectedness both in insight and outcome. This connectedness is thus for me ontological, epistemological and of aesthetic meaning. It finds expression in my practice very often as negotiation of ethical concerns which I am trying to address.

My problem has been in finding a form which would not obstruct a harmony which, as I have tried to show in Parts One and Two I perceive as a necessary aspect of this writing. Eisner (1993) said:

'Humans do not simply have experiences; they have a hand in their creation and the quality of their creation depends upon the ways in which they employ their minds.' (p.5)

He goes on to say:

'Representation, as I use the term, is not the mental representation discussed in cognitive science (Shepard, 1982, 1990), but rather the process of transforming the contents of consciousness into a public form

so that they can be stabilized, inspected, edited and shared with others. Representation is what confers a publicly social dimension to cognition. Since forms of representation differ, the kinds of experience they make possible also differ. Different kinds of experience lead to different meanings, which, in turn, make different forms of understanding possible.' (p.6)

I want in this Part to release more powerful educational meanings than I believe I have been able to do up to now in this thesis, and I want to do it in a way which is fitted to the task.

As I outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, and have tried to articulate in practice in Part One, the creative nature of the work I do in education should be reflected within my forms of representation. I do not want my writing about the processes I am involved in to be a technical exercise, but actually to enhance their educational value. As I also wish one of the principal standards by which you judge this thesis to be drawn from the significant balance I achieve between educational expression and meaning, I am drawing your attention to this aspect yet again.

Part Three (written in 1993/4)

Echoes: Returning to the Golden Tapestry

Ph.D. Journal entry:

'5.10.93. 4 a.m. How can I possibly draw together East Germany, 'Returning' (1992b) what matters to me in my educative relationships, my economic situation, the choices I am making for the future, The World Congress ⁵, what I am now going to do as a result of the work I have already done, in a way which matters to me more than the writing I have so far done in the thesis?

The golden thread (Henry, 1993). That's what I have to find. That's what I have to show in Part Three. Because within that golden thread is the reason that money doesn't matter to me much at all, and why continuing to work in action research (for nothing if necessary) does so very much. What partly constitutes the aesthetic of my own existence (Foucault, 1984) as well as my educative relationships with students. Why some of my students are still contacting me after the work is done, our 'educative' relationship having transformed into something else, and why I will not be content with a thesis which finishes in ways which do not answer for the place of my own creativity in my life. Because somewhere I know that it's part of this golden thread. I could call it a common denominator, but there's no value in that for me; but something does inform everything I do in Education and in my life. In fact this golden thread binds together the personal and the professional for me in bonds too powerful to sunder. I think I need to extract that golden thread and hold it up to the light of day, that in making it visible to a reader of my thesis, I might also explain

⁵ In July 1994, Jack Whitehead, with Professor Pam Lomax from Kingston University, is hosting the World Congress (3) on Action Research, Action Learning, and Process Management at the University of Bath and I am helping in the organisation of it.

it to myself.

Spring, 1994. I finished Part One of this thesis dissatisfied, and Part Two even more so. I would like to ask you to be patient in this final part of the thesis, as I intend to go back into my recent history. It is only because after finishing Part Two that I could understand its limitations. I want to express in an educational setting what my golden threads might be. I believe as well that I will find it deeply linked to the aesthetic morphology of my own life and work. It starts becoming manifest during a visit to East Germany (actually in 1992 it was no longer East Germany at all, but that was and is the way I still think about it), and was expressed in a short novel written within weeks of coming back. I think this work of fiction articulates more profoundly my commitment to education and to life in general than anything I have written so far in this text. This golden thread runs through my educative relationships with students at the University, and into my decisions for my present activities in this academic year (1993-1994). It is a glimmer in every decision I make in my life and explains (if I can express it) my actions in the world. A short while ago I wrote to my supervisor. I was discouraged, almost despairing, for I knew that I was failing one of my own living standards of judgement which I had started to explicate in Parts One and Two. Indeed this standard of judgement was one of the most important aspects of Part Two at all. However I didn't then know quite what it was I was failing:

'30.9.93. All my adult life I have been carried along by a spirit...My literature (fictional) was an expression of this spirit. Now I feel uncomfortable in my own skin. My fiction was an expression of spirit. Once however, I started to understand what I was doing and what it

meant, and the place it occupied in my life and in the lives of others, then it could no longer serve the same purpose and I was doomed to write about a world in which spirit and self were becoming separate. In caring about 'violation' I violated myself. In knowing about 'caring relationships' I have written only dulled approximations and something of the care is lost. My educational writing seems to me on one level to be perfectly adequate. It is possible that no one else would recognise the shadows instead of the real thing, but I recognise them and I am lessened by that recognition.'

The spirit that I write of is one which seeks a reconciliation with itself and others and is always aspiring to express something of my ontological experiences. In 1991 I wrote a story-cum-Practical Criticism of 'The Ancient Mariner' poem which I have already mentioned in connection with a group of eleven year olds and in the section called Educational Practical Criticism in Part One (Laidlaw, 1988). I think it was an attempt, in Bruner's (1990) words to find an:

'ontologically final interpretation...of the [man's] act', (p.118)

because I have always perceived the mariner's problem as one of fragmentation: a harmful and corrupting separation of spirit from intelligence. And fragmentation has always been a puzzle to me. I present a critique of the poem through a narrative written from a postmodernist mariner's point of view:

I remembered my father's words and was somehow split from myself as a child. I could no longer smell his workroom; I could no longer feel the

simple love in his years of hard work; I could no longer smile with sweet pangs of nostalgia about such harmony: it seemed sentimental and missing the point. My fellows bored me. The voyage had become an idea in my head, something from which I looked on remotely. I felt, as I looked at my fellows in the aura of the moon that evening, a sense of revulsion from them. Not the nausea of Sartre, although I have explained it like that elsewhere, to try and capture that reality for prior readers. No, it was different. Or at least, you will understand it differently. Let me tell it this way. They were all standing around, or lounging by candlelight. The wind had dropped quite frighteningly. Some were sitting and playing cards and their voices were brash and cut the silence into jagged and bleeding edges. I felt the mists, cool and gentle, floating about me. I breathed the outside into the inside, and the sharp coldness was like an illumination of my soul. And then the harsh voices. I closed my eyes. I saw my father's workroom recede before my inner eyes, I felt the warmth of his love fade before their ignorant ravings and I wept.

I had been whole and now I was not. I was fractured and splintered. You understand that, reader. You understand because you live in an age which splinters and fractures, and dissects into all its pustulent constituents. Your whole lives are spent colluding and collaborating in this Grand Lie. I can tell this story to you because we are opposites, you and I. I was once whole and I fragmented. You are fragmented and struggle to become whole. Was my fragmentation an exposition of original sin?

Bruner (1990) writes, (and I agree with him):

'There are no causes to be grasped with certainty where the act of

creating meaning is concerned, only acts, expressions and contexts to be interpreted.' (p. 118)

However, my search for ontological unity is not, in my opinion, misplaced. It enables me to research into my educational, ethical, and aesthetic truths in ways which matter to others as well as to me. Indeed, this section of the thesis is an attempt to show in what ways such a synthesis is educationally valid.

My sense of spirit manifests itself as a desire to be reconciled with a state of being which is in harmony with itself and other human beings, and is well expressed by Bernstein (1991) in writing about Hegel:

'Although the history of humanity is experienced as a diremptive ruptured homelessness, the reconciliation that it promises means a 'return' to humanity's 'proper' abode where all estrangement is finally overcome.' (p.294)

I would like this final section of the thesis to give expression to what Wood (1990) describes, also in relation to Hegel's ideas, this time about 'spirit':

'Mind or spirit is its return to itself. As a natural being, the human being, through its awareness of itself...transcends the merely natural to the level of the spiritual. 'Spirit' embraces not only 'subjective spirit' (individual psychology), but also 'objective spirit' (society or culture...) and finally 'absolute spirit', the realm of art...and philosophy, those forms of higher human culture in which spirit becomes aware of itself

as absolute or the ultimate reality'. (p.4)

This writing is an attempt to get back in touch with my spirit in a way which will harmonise my educational, ontological, ethical and aesthetic perceptions. I want to understand what this spirit really is, so that I can focus it educationally. Writing this final part had to be done: I could not leave the thesis alone. I believe it was my spirit in search of itself.

I am not sure how to represent this present exploration. I do not wish it to become an ego-centred exploration. It is a belief in its educational significance which carries me forward, a sense that I often used to experience before I started to write fiction. This time, though, I want to communicate educationally. I believe that I have transmuted fictional representation into an educational narrative, whose audience, I hope, will come to share directly some of the values and worth of this metamorphosis. As I have tried to show in Parts One and Two, I am beginning to understand the ramifications of an educational epistemology which draws upon ontology, ethics and aesthetics. I hope to reveal how I understand that in this final Part.

In Part One of this thesis I wrote at some length about the significance of the 'I' in an action enquiry (Whitehead, 1989b) and also the shift from 'I' to 'we' (see Griffiths and Davies, 1993, as an example of a collaborative and emancipatory action enquiry). This writing demonstrates, I believe, a development in my understanding of the significance of such a move.

A: 'I': the self.

'Selfhood involves the desire for self-certainty...humans' fundamental

desires include the desire to establish their self-worth through self-positing and self-interpretation.' (Wood, 1990: 90)

Let me try this:

East Germany:

The Echo of Values.

I returned from East Germany (my first visit) in April 1992 and knew that my life could never be the same again. I had experienced something there which drew into perspective some of the aspects of my own existence and started me thinking very carefully about what it was I wanted to do with my life. I was awed by the peace and quiet I found there. I shrink from noise which fills space for the sake of it - I love silence because often I find a deeper resonance and connection to existence through it than through what I perceive as this modern tendency to violate every space with raucous and meaningless pap in the mistaken (I believe) idea that silence is meaningless. Through silence I believe I discover who I am and my place in the world. Through silence I believe I understand more about existence:

'We walked a while in silence until we reached a bench and there we sat, watching the world going by for a while, until I felt I could bear the silence no longer. I have now learnt the value of silence, its healing and strengthening qualities, its ability to change reality, to harden resolve, or even to temper justice with mercy.' (My novel, *Returning*, p.12)

(Throughout this part of the thesis I will quote from my novel *'Returning'*

(Laidlaw, 1992b) using *this italicised font* for your ease of reading, followed by the page number.)

The quiet in Zarrentin was palpable, a mellifluous resonance, which brought tears to my eyes and relief to my heart that somewhere could exist like this. Paskow (1988) describes a very similar experience and goes on to relate its meaning for his own perceptions and actions. Through the silence I discovered the sympathetic vibrations of my own existence. I do not sentimentalise the East German's sorrow and their alienation from what has happened and is happening to them, overtaking them beyond their control. I simply found something there which I have never experienced before except when listening to Bach's sacred music, and which I believe the West has lost: a slowness in the pace of life; a greater affinity to their surroundings, when without technology they have had to develop closer links with nature and with their surroundings than we in the West are often accustomed to. In this slowness I had time to understand who I was and my place in the world:

Each separate being in the universe

returns to the common source.

Returning to the source is serenity.

If you don't realize the source,

you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

(Lao Tzu: 'Tao Te Ching')

I didn't go there to understand something, but I returned enriched, in a state I can only describe as haunted. As I write these words I recognise the

whispers of haunting still. I believe that the echoes of this time will always be with me. I hear them whatever corner I turn and they resonate in various disguises within the decisions I can now make about my life:

'It changed the way I looked at everything since. It grew with me like a Siamese twin, and now that I have come back I know that I do not ever want to leave. I carried Schwerentin about with me over the years and wherever I was, seemed to me only to be real as far as it compared with this place. I know that I've come home. I know that this place is where I belong.' (p.57)

In a few days after coming back I wrote 40,000 words, into which I poured the atmosphere and insights which I had gained there in my short visit. The quotation above is a typical example of the kinds of concerns with which the novel deals. The little village by a lake that I visited in reality, with a huge dilapidated abbey dated 1080, one dusty street and a village green which edged onto a forest, seemed an external manifestation for me at that time, of meanings which I had all my conscious life struggled to express. I sat on a bench backing onto the green foliage, looking up at the abbey. No cars disturbed the peace. The wind rustled gently in the trees. Nothing drew away my attention but a kind of rural calm.

Those moments I sat there are the closest I have ever come to understanding the purpose of my life. As I do not believe that purpose is only felt but must be lived, then the following pages must attempt to draw out that moment when I became aware that I was weaving a golden thread into the fabric of my life. These pages should demonstrate the most profound significance within this thesis and to my future life in education

and beyond. Those moments of stillness signify for me the creative inspiration which has led to this manifestation of the art of my own existence and the place of its representation in this text and beyond.

Let me try this:

Returning:

Echoes of Another Reality

'Returning' is set in a fictional country lying between East and West Germany. It spans twenty four years from the European student-uprisings of 1968, to 1992. It tells the story of a young man, David Myers, who, after graduating from University with a Law degree, travels in Europe for a while, hitting by chance on a tiny country a friend of his, Samuel, had found the previous year. It is a place, the like of which he has never encountered, run by an elder, Ilse, whose wisdom and values are strangely attractive to him. He stays a few weeks in the community, getting to know many of the people, despite the language barrier, and feels that he has come home, that there is nothing alien about them. In particular he falls in love with a young woman there, Katarina, but she is not interested in him. Then he leaves with great regret to pick up his career in a Law firm in Oxford and then later in another international law firm. The next twenty one years are spent trying to understand the significance of Schwerentin to his life. Katarina marries Samuel and the couple often visit him. His own life is barren and seemingly without love and hope. He keeps thinking about Schwerentin, about going back, but never seems to have the courage. Then 1989 resounds with the knocking-down of the Berlin wall. One day he receives a delayed letter from Ilse asking him to come back as she is ill and wants to see him. He returns immediately but

Ilse has already died. She named him village elder and he realises that the whole of his life as a lawyer in England has taught him the value of Schwerentin in his life and as such he is now fitted to lead the tiny country through the years ahead. It ends on a note of great optimism for the future. David has realised his full potential as a human being, has struggled to understand the world and in so doing has come to understand himself. It is a fictionalising of Jungian psychology as well as being a *Bildungsroman*.⁶

Let me try this:

Ontological Authenticity:

Echoes of Personal Knowledge (Polanyi, 1958)

In this section I want to explain why it is that I start from the premise of the educational significance of basing my explanations within personal knowledge. Here I find something profound in the words of Socrates:

If my perception is true to me, being inseparable from my own being;...and to myself I am judge of what is and what is not to me...How then, since I never err, and since my mind never trips in the conception of being and becoming, can I fail of knowing that which I perceive?’ (‘Theaetetus’: p. 284)

I am not claiming in this thesis that if I believe something it must be right: I am putting forward the tenet that starting from the basis of respecting personal knowledge (mine and others’) is an educational one, for it sets up

⁶ By ‘Bildungsroman’ I understand a form of novel which concentrates on the growing moral and experiential maturation of the main character, usually over an extended time-span.

a dialectic between self and context which enables negotiation to become a pivotal point of the educational processes. As an active respect of the reality of individuals is a cornerstone of my work in education (as I hope I have demonstrated in previous Parts of this thesis), then I start from a position of self-respect. In education, as in my own life, I seek to understand what it entails to treat others with the respect with which I try to treat myself.

Since writing the first draft of this final part of the thesis created out of the dissonance between despair and hope about a work conceived from a nexus in my own life, I read an article by Alicia Kuczynska (1988), 'Tradition as Innovation'. Imagine my awe as the significance and synchronicity of the following words began to dawn on me:

'The archetypal image of the 'return' as a positive mechanism is deeply rooted in ancient philosophy, in Orphic and Platonic thought. 'Return' constitutes a sui generis bridge linking two different beings which exist in time and beyond time.' (p.103)

'In his returning we shall be whole again as he will. And we are all in sore need of wholeness. It is, after all, in the search for wholeness that the meaning and the purpose of our lives rests.' (p.63)

I *knew* at a deeply ontological level, that for my own life, as an expression of my unique humanity and its own relationship to the world, 'Returning' gives a poignant and well-written voice to the heart of my insights. If this present writing is to be educational, however, then I need to acknowledge the story as a rhetorical rendering of existential as well as educational

values, rather than a realistic one in the name of education. I see education as requiring a transparent mediation between this text and the culture in which it has arisen. To convert 'Returning', or at least the insights within it, into an educationally significant piece of work, I need the illumination of my values to be rendered through the living educative relationships with my students. I believe that this thesis is now ready to exemplify this. I am moving to a perception of the value of truly educational writing and thus my own educational development is enhanced. 'Returning' represents an expression of my ontology in a way which deeply satisfies me. I am now justifying the use of 'Returning' as an ontologically authentic piece of writing against which I can judge the quality of my transferring of my ontological values into practice in education and into this present writing. In this writing I must also manage to convince you that a representation of ontological authenticity for me is indivisible from the kinds of values which I bring with me into education, and that such a portrayal is in keeping with a thesis which seeks to be validated as an original contribution to educational knowledge.

Tony Ghaye (1992) poses these questions in relation to this type of authenticity⁷:

How far have the understandings of the participants improved, clarified, matured, expanded, and been elaborated upon during the process of the research? Can the participant(s) attest to the fact that they now understand the issue better, understand a broader range of issues or appreciate that which they have previously failed to understand fully?

⁷This idea of ontological authenticity mentioned before in Part Two is unquestionably one of the strands of this golden thread. It keeps bringing me up short every time a piece of writing seems to be finished.

I believe that I am showing what it means for me to know my own educational development as I have attempted (and still continue to attempt) to engage others in educative conversations and correspondences about their own educational practices. I believe that I am showing in my present actions and this writing, creative and literary abilities and my desire to realise the greatest good in the world, a unity which is in my own terms, a desirable goal also for my own educational development. I will return later to Ghaye's statement (above) to see how far and in what ways I can be said to be fulfilling this standard of judgement.

I believe as well that I am demonstrating a greater understanding of what constitutes my role as an educator, given my now greater understanding of the ontology underpinning it. My writing of 'Returning' was an expression of a personal truth that my inner and outer worlds need to be in a constant and developing dialectic in order that I might both act and explain those actions which satisfy my own standards of judgement. In July I wrote this in my journal:

'I can see that in forming a rationalisation about what has happened to me and then acting on it, enables others to understand. It also enables me to understand to a certain extent. But it is not me. It is a formulation of me that misses the point. I think somewhere in here resides my resistance to the politicisation of what I do. It explains how I can write a text about a country, located in space and time and political history and yet create a world in which those are mere trappings, mere clothing for the body of meaning which lies beneath. In Schwerentin I realised a

personal metaphor. I came closer to an authentic expression of what I am, rather than what I do, than I have ever achieved in my educational fictions.'

I am attempting to reveal metaphor not as simple rhetoric but as a grounding for my own reality, from which you can begin to perceive the point of this endeavour. This synthesis between form and content becomes additionally significant at the point at which you can identify with my need not to be content with an explanation of my educative relationships but to see the value of using as a yardstick the insights expressed in 'Returning' as illuminations of the ontological basis for that explanation.

By sharing the essence of 'Returning' with you and relating it to the educational insights and living relationships with students (some of which continue despite the course having finished) I believe that I achieve a profoundly aesthetic verisimilitude - that I become the artist who can view her own canvas with some dispassion, who is, in CC's words, 'both artist and art critic' (Lin, 1993). At the same time, however, I express my passion for education in part through the care I am taking to craft this educational narrative. (The point of care is one I will return to a little later.)

Let me try this:

Art and Truth:

Echoes of a Dialectic

'In the section about Art and Truth I need to draw out more, the qualities

which synthesise those two aspects of my educational life and show their effect in my educational processes.’ (Letter to Peter Mellett, 27.10.93. after the Validation Meeting.)

There is, I believe, literary merit in ‘Returning’ which enhances its validity as a work of art which seeks to speak the truth about experience:

‘I had pictures to take in my mind, angles to negotiate, lights to shadow, shapes to record. I willed my mind to take these snapshots that later I might sit in my flat in Oxford and take them out of a Winter’s evening from their filmy wrappings. So that I could bear to live where it was I had to live.’ (p.18)

As I sat in Zarrentin I willed myself to record what I could see so that later I might understand its significance for my life. Much later in my diary I wrote this about my work with CC:

‘21.12.92. In the video session with CC this morning, there was a moment when she was sitting, after the great struggle to express what was her sorrow and her need to articulate that sorrow, when she sat up, took up the pen from the table and started writing, when she took control. She led me through what it was she wanted to do. I know that this moment signifies something very important indeed. Not only to her life and not just to my research. But to everything I believe in about education. I need to remember this. I need to remember how it felt. It matters. It really matters! She seemed to grow before my eyes. She empowered herself and I am empowered by helping her to bring it about.’

'I wondered whether I would ever stop seeing this place in my mind's eye, and whether I would ever be able to come back again.' (p.18)

I want in this section to bring together my literary skills, all those years of writing fiction in order to discover what it was I really cared about as well as expressing it, through a form which satisfies me, my own standards of judgements, in which form and content are indeed symbiotically linked, nurturing each other. In which the form and expression of that form are beautiful and satisfy those aesthetic criteria through which I was able to judge the quality of my educative relationships. Not simply for their own sake, but because in such a synthesis, meanings are born, nurtured, raised to full maturity and then multiply:

'I simply know that there is a creative life in everything we do: in any enterprise that is the result of human interaction there is a birth, a growth, a maturity, a falling off and a death.' (p.60) *'I know now that mere reflection on experience...is not enough. I know now that it's about synthesis...'* (p.4)

In a letter to Peter Mellett, the M.Ed. colleague mentioned earlier, I wrote this:

4.10.93. One thing struck me here in your first paragraph. You write about your text being a vehicle which seeks to communicate a redressing of the imbalance of the lost art of living. Without metaphor (and other artistic devices) I wonder whether a writer simply slips into stipulations, guidelines, rather than a work of art. If your life is a work of art and you seek to promote the art of your own life both in the living and the

description of it, should not that description itself adhere to those standards of judgement that you would make about your own life? Crafted narratives (see Shulman, 1992, AERA Presidential Address, and also Witherell, C., & Noddings, N., (1991), 'Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education', Teachers College Press, Columbia University, New York and London) recognise implicitly and explicitly the incommensurability of portrayal with experience but make meanings and raise significance through their attempts. It's like perfection. You can never get there, but the point is in the trying.

I perceive an important connection in terms of knowledge between Truth and Art. It is to do with knowledge for it is concerned with ways of laying claim to validity in perceptions and conclusions. If I am trying to judge the quality of my educative relationships and educational practice through an ontological standard of judgement (which is what 'Returning' symbolises), and this ontology is itself connected to what I can understand by 'authenticity' and 'truth' reflected in an art form, then the quality of the 'art' revealed in 'Returning' becomes significant as I attempt to relate my ontology to my educational practice. Furthermore as I have said earlier in the thesis, I perceive education as a value-laden practical activity and as an art form, for the values underpinning good education, I perceive as largely similar to those characterising good art. (See again Part One, the Introduction to my work with Sarah. (N.B. 1996, see Epilogue to Part Four.)

I will take an above example from 'Returning' as an example of an excerpt with literary merit. I perceive literary merit to be concerned itself with issues of ethics and ontology coined in ways which embrace aesthetic sensibilities. It will also contain episodes which mirror in significance the

whole, i.e. critical moments which reveal symbolically the intentions of the author. (See again the exposition of a critical moment in Bach's Matthew Passion in the Introduction to Part One.)

'I had pictures to take in my mind, angles to negotiate, lights to shadow, shapes to record. I willed my mind to take these snapshots that later I might sit in my flat in Oxford and take them out of a Winter's evening from their filmy wrappings. So that I could bear to live where it was I had to live.' (p.18)

The level of imagery in this excerpt seems unforced to me. Others have noted the same. A literary critic in London reviewing the work had this to say:

August 1992...Some of the imagery is strikingly original. [Cites the above]. This gripped me. I was convinced by the description and the characterisation which this represents.'

David (the hero) has a flaw. He confuses expediency with inevitability. He is therefore unable to act cogently. He has not grasped the responsibility for his own decisions in his life: he wants to stay but dare not step outside the framework in which social expectation takes responsibility for an individual's actions. Thus he takes 'snapshots in his mind' rather than staying in Schwerentin. And the wrappers are 'filmy', underlining again the synthetic nature of his desire, the lack of clarity and authenticity. Until he has reconciled his intentions with his incipient insights, he is condemned to live an inauthentic existence. This is reflected in all the imagery in the above. Even the light is shadowed - suggestions of taint and

darkness. Light is a leit-motif within the novel and represents clarity and determination. There is also here an implied confusion: the descriptions of the mental photographs are represented almost cosily, and yet embedded within the words are 'had to live' and 'bear to live'. This is contained within a grammatically incomplete sentence, which emphasises it. Until David recognises that he will never be comfortable until he has taken an ontological responsibility for his own life, he will continue to waste his precious time. He envisages 'Winter' evenings back in England. Not warm and light and loving, but cold and dark and isolated.

On another level of verisimilitude, David is, of course, a symbolic representation of my own innermost self. I have come to comprehend about my own life that until I can act from a conscious understanding of what it means to act from a standpoint of ontological authenticity, I will not be bringing to my educative relationships the cogency that I perceive them as deserving.

I do not believe that I am capable of portraying adequately the synthesis between a self and representation, but the point, as I said to Peter Mellett in our cited correspondence, is in the trying. It seems to me that it is only in the aspiration that we can realise how to communicate what is of value.

Let me try this:

Expediency or Authenticity?

Echoes of a Curiouser⁸ World

⁸ Lewis Carroll coined this word 'curiouser' in 'Alice in Wonderland'. It was meant to denote Alice's alienation from the reality around her.

Employment Service, 8.9.93.

...The Adjudication Officer has decided, based on the information held to date, that your entitlement to Benefit is as follows:

FROM 19/07/93/ AT £0.00 A WEEK

You may be able to get Income Support as this is not affected by the decision on Unemployment Benefit claim. Ask at the Office for a claim form if you do not have enough money to live on. If you are already receiving it, your overall payment will be unchanged.

If you disagree with the decision you have an immediate right of appeal to an independent tribunal. If you want to appeal you should write saying exactly what you are appealing against and why you disagree with the decision.

This payment represents:

'insufficient contributions sometime during the tax years to April 1991, and/or April 1992.

It has also come to our notice that you have been paid £301.22p

of Unemployment Benefit which is an excess payment of £301.22p. Please forward this amount by return.

I received this letter on the day when I was about to leave the house to attend the BERA conference in Liverpool. I had about £80 between myself and destiny and a rent payment of over £200 looming. I had made a decision in July that I would not be seeking much paid employment as there was so much Action Research work that needed (in my view) doing here at the University. However, by taking on Undergraduate teaching of two hours a week in the form of a tutorial with about twenty students, I would both manage to survive materially and continue to facilitate within developmental educative relationships. I recognised the time I had before me as an opportunity. It could also become a way of fully living out my values. Above all I was apprehensive about not making this commitment:

'My growing victories were essentially pyrrhic, for they replaced idealism, love and authenticity with compromise, ambiguity of purpose, lack of vision and alienation, both from myself and my fellow human beings, many of whom I objectified to foils for my own needs and insights.' (p.27)

I felt that I was in danger of:

'looking back and seeing that everything I had done in my life ha(d) been a compromise between what I really wanted to do in my heart of hearts and what I settled for - the path of least resistance. There is a hollowness in putting your own life together like that, seeing the patterns evolve out of your memories like ghosts, haunting the places of your dreams, and seducing you away from promise into regret and even despair.' (p.46)

In a letter to my supervisor, I wrote:

July, 1993. I feel that I am about to enter a stage of my life over which I have both no control and total control. I feel scared and disorientated. I wonder at my commitment and my persistence. At the moment I feel that I am living almost on blind faith. I don't like being blind. It feels precarious and strange, dangerous. I might fall, break my neck. I might lose my way. I might lose contact with the people I love. I might cease to understand them...I cannot look forward now unless I look back. I have to understand why I am doing what I am doing. I really don't know.

I got on the 'phone to the DHSS immediately. I believe it is because I am white, middle class and expect to be dealt with fairly, that I am articulate and can be assertive when I am threatened, the whole mistake was cleared up very quickly. But it gave me a fright. It unsettled me and made me look again very closely at the choice I had made. To give up the security which employment gave me I knew was not something to be taken on lightly. But always in the back of my mind I was driven to avoid something which would negate what I had discovered through my educative relationships about the value to me of living out my values, of enabling others to speak with their own voices. Of not only empowering myself but enabling others to empower themselves too. I was desperate to avoid this:

'exchang(ing) idealism for...ambition and comfort...As if although my body were here going through the motions, doing a competent job, my heart and my soul were elsewhere.' (p.49)

I was afraid to make a compromise which would occasion any split between my values and my actions: I preferred to make a substantial compromise in my standard of living. I also want to make it clear that I

am no Mother Teresa! The joy I experience in living out my values is sustaining and for me life-affirming. Jennie, a PGCE student (1992/93) wrote to me:

1.9.93. Dear Moira, What are you doing now? Have you found anything for next year? Are you looking? Don't you feel the Uni has taken advantage of all your enthusiasm? I know you said you felt you were the one who was getting the most out of the situation, but I do feel that it's more difficult for us to encourage next year's students into doing Action Research as they won't have you like we did.

I suppose I see something personally inauthentic in my acting purely out of material expediency when I have experienced the power of educative relationships to affirm a theory of my own being which enhances my life, and, I think I can now claim, the lives of others.

About a month ago, however, I wrote this to Lara (PG student '92/93) about my thesis:

'Jack thinks I ought to be including stuff about my financial circumstances and the choices that I have made, but in a sense I don't feel affected by the change in my economic circumstances and I don't want to be read as if I believe that material well-being can affect the meanings in my life. But I think somewhere he has a point. I just hope I can express this in a way which does justice to my point of view. I suppose it might be a point worth making.'

Apart from revealing a development in my way of thinking as regards the

significance of my economic situation, this letter also bears witness to the desire to include my (ex) students in my decisions about education. Writing to Lara helped me to understand in retrospect, what is the impact of my economic circumstances on my life. For example in their recent article, Tasker and Packham (1993) discuss the conflict between industrial and educational values and conclude their 'incommensurability' (p. 127).

McTaggart (1993) describes their contradictory nature thus:

'the new 'economic rationalism' is a worldwide phenomenon which 'guides' not only the conduct of transnational corporations, but governments and their agencies as well...We have moved beyond the reductionism which leads all questions to be discussed as if they were economic ones (de-valuation) to a situation in which moral questions are denied completely (de-moralisation) in a cult of economic inevitability.' (p.50)

His conclusion is that educational processes require:

'a reversal of the subordination of moral idealism by materialism and a more egalitarian world.' (p.59)

This thesis does not show what appears to be a causal relationship between a decision to act against material values and a process of education, but rather an affirmation of qualities which I believe in action stand against this 'demoralisation' and 'devaluation' which McTaggart refers to. I do not wish my work to be seen as the result of a negative dialectic but one which affirms a constructivist view (Kincheloe, 1991) of human existence. At the

beginning of my novel, the hero believed he:

'was going to deal with the great issues of right and wrong. These were impermeable and unshakable truths, not subject to human frailty. Not the premises of fallible subjectivity. Great issues of right and wrong were to be [his] stage. Not people and their petty squabbings for power and influence. [He] didn't formulate this at the time, merely spoke about it, eloquently and empty to anyone who cared to listen.' (p.2)

He has yet to learn about the relativist and constructivist view of reality in which personal responsibility for one's own actions in the world (a personal ethic in other words) becomes an ontological epistemology. And which enables individuals to develop and use this transformation to help others develop. The hero David feared that he:

'[might] give up for what he knew, what was expected of him, and, yes, what he felt a degree of security in.' (p.22)

I want you, the reader, to be aware of this factor in the forming of my educational life. I see around me what I consider to be expediency (McTaggart's economic rationalism) masquerading as predestiny, and believe that a conscious part-freeing of myself from the constraints of economic decisions mistaken for educational insights, will enable me to explore within my educative relationships those human qualities which I believe enhance our ability to lead full and productive lives. To lead a full and productive life is, I contend, the aim of education, and what I mean by 'full' and 'productive' I am trying to reveal in the context of the ontology and epistemology of my educative practice in this final section.

B. 'You'

'Self-certainty requires recognition...What I need is an object capable of reflecting back to me my conception of myself as a free self, and that object can only be another free self.' (Wood, 1990: 90)

Let me try this:

Being and Becoming:

Echoes of a Journey

'I want to talk with you. I want to get to know you. I cannot simply talk to you. We need to talk together.' (p.58)

On 9.9.93. CC and I had a conversation. She was within days of completing her dissertation. She wanted me to write to her about what it was I thought she was achieving in her work. I wrote the following:

Dear CC,

You asked me what I thought you had achieved in your dissertation. In some ways I am rather reluctant to write this: it is your dissertation, after all. However in the explaining of this reluctance, I might paradoxically be able to say something of value. Let's see.

When I was looking through the Wordsworth last night, and I found the poem about Tintern Abbey, it led me to think about the harmony which you seem to be seeking through your life and in its written expression.

Whereas Wordsworth gives voice to his existence as resonating in harmony with nature, in a kind of pantheistic expression, your dissertation seems to me to find the sympathetic vibrations between your own struggle to live and to write about that struggle. The result is a work of art whose aesthetic constitutes an affirmation of the art of living educational insights and processes. There is, it seems to me, a very fine line you are asking me to tread here. I recognise your right to express yourself authentically. I also recognise that you have been both the artist and the art critic in this work. Your art criticism is a further expression of your own right to set the standards of judgement for your work, a further way in which you are speaking with your own voice. My comments could therefore on one level appear to be a violation of your own right to speak on your own behalf.

'I realised that I could not expect her words to speak for me. Ilse never spoke for another. Such was her belief, lived rather than stated, that each individual has to find her own pathway towards expression.' (p.65)

But if you see not only 'being' but 'being together' as forces for development in the human spirit, then by giving you these words to use as you see fit, you can integrate anything which appears to you to be of use and to amplify those sympathetic vibrations. (This is not to suggest that my words must be in agreement, for even in constrained disagreement these ideas might still be resonating with your own in ways which develop the harmonies into counterpoint.)

What have you achieved? Your dissertation is, it appears to me, to be so appositely named: 'a process of becoming'. In a sense it is open-ended, as

educational processes so often are. You have experimented with a form to bring life to your educational experiences and insights. The result seems to me to have become a fusion between form and content, much as happens within poetry and music. Because I believe this process of becoming cannot ever be finished there is a sense in which your dissertation, in its multiple sections and areas of interest, might necessarily be partially fragmented. But because you are both artist and art critic, you seize this paradox particularly through the language you use to express your understanding.

I think you have achieved something of what Lao-Tzu writes about:

*We join spokes together in a wheel,
but it is the centre hole
that makes the wagon move.*

*We shape clay into a pot,
but it is the emptiness inside
that holds whatever we want.*

*We hammer wood for a house,
but it is the inner space
that makes it livable.*

*We work with being,
and non-being is what we use.*

(Lao Tzu, 'Tao Te Ching')

Especially those final lines: 'We work with being/and non-being is what we use.' Your dissertation is a testament to hope in a world which, you seem to perceive, is both heaven and hell.

I think in this letter I demonstrate a desire to help CC without preempting or taking away from her, the responsibility for her own learning. I believe that I seek to communicate with her in ways which show my valuing of her as a unique human being (Holley, 1992). In which I am recognising her right to perceive the world in her own unique way as she struggles to give voice to an educational set of experiences. My inclusion of Lao Tzu was a conscious attempt to show her that I had remembered past conversations and that I thought her words significant. I am also showing a concern to reveal my understanding of her work in ways which affirm her worth but also challenge where necessary.

I believe that CC recognises the care that has been taken and the significance of this concern. In her dissertation, she writes this:

'As the title of this dissertation suggests ('Action Research: a Process of Becoming'), this piece of writing is aiming to present a process, a process of an educative awakening, as process of becoming...It - the process of becoming through the search for a living educational theory - implies the potentiality of synergetic growth between both parties in an enquiry.....'

'Since I now have gained the understanding of the essential basics of the meanings of human existence, I will be able to enlarge my capacity to

embrace the realities of others. From the meaninglessness of life to the meaningfulness of life through an intense, mutual and trusting relationship between Moira and I, I have gained a strength that will enable me to have the sincerity to respect others' realities. I have come to the stage of recognising the uniqueness of each individual's search for ...meanings...the struggles in the process of becoming and the need for a real communication between them.' (diary entry)' (p.101/102)

In her conclusion she writes this:

'Only when Being and Being Together co-exist, will it then be meaningful for any pursuit for 'Perfection'. (Educative Conversation between Moira, Jack and CC, 9.8.93.)' (p.120)

We work with Being

And non-being is what we use.

(Lao Tzu, 'Tao Te Ching')

I have always tried to hold onto non-being as I wrestle with being. Only now am I able to articulate this in a way other than in my practice:

Return is the movement of the Tao.

Yielding is the way of the Tao.

All things are born of being.

Being is born of non-being.

(Lao Tzu, 'Tao Te Ching')

CC's struggle to construct a representation of a form which did not violate her own sense of authenticity became the focal point of all her academic endeavours. She was wrestling with existential and ontological dichotomies (life and death, meaningfulness and meaninglessness, hope and despair, love and hate, to name but a few). In her dissertation she then tried to offer a synthesis in a form which would communicate the reality of her struggle. For this she characterised the externalisation of the process she was going through as a notion of becoming, which was in itself a sign that within her she had tipped the balance towards a life-affirming choice. My role in this was to enable her to do it - by recognising the significance of what she was trying to do, and giving her the space in which to explore the limits of her original insights. And all this within the necessary parameters of deadlines and M.Ed. regulations. I recognised as crucial her attempt to create something positive and life-affirming, something of educational value within the implications of 'becoming'.

Kuczynska (1988), again in her article 'Tradition as Innovation', writes this:

'The expression of the acceptance of the category of 'becoming' instead of 'is', is the ennoblement in theoretical thought of the principle of 'in between'...'In between' is the sphere of the appearance of potentiality which is to be exploited.' (p.105)

Although I do not relate to the way in which Kuczynska has expressed her ideas, I feel a powerful resonance with the essence of what I understand from it:

'A mutually fulfilling future cannot be taken for granted. It must always

be a dialectic between our needs, our actions, our understanding and our historical and geographical locations.' (p.62)'[We need a] true communion between oneself and others, in which a working together, a harmony of perspective reached through negotiation and trial and error, were the cornerstones of our lives.' (p.56)

In his search for existential fulfilment the hero of 'Returning' is consolidated through his acceptance of the necessity of becoming rather than simply being. My educational development is characterised by the degree to which I can integrate my ontological reality into practice within my educative relationships. CC's dissertation has enabled me to articulate the educational connections between being and becoming and the significance of so doing.

'She (Katarina) came over to the window and stood next to me and held my hand, resting her head on my shoulder and gazing out. I do not know what she was seeing out of that window, opening on a blue sky of opaque clarity, but I glimpsed Schwerentin. I could even smell the woodsmoke, see the delighted looks of welcome, hear Ilse's measured and calm tones of love and clarification, and touch at that moment my own utter peace and tranquillity. I closed my eyes against a too great explosion of pleasure, and held tightly onto Katarina's fingers.' (p.43)

A short while ago I wrote this to Sarah:

7.9.93.

Dear Sarah,

How goes it? I thought I would write to wish you lots of luck for the new job. I hope it's everything you want it to be. I remember my first few weeks at Wenlock. Nerve-wracking and exhilarating all at the same time. I think it was the recognition that I was in the right job. It's a harder job you're going into than I did, though, and I really hope it all goes well.

As you can see I've enclosed the stuff about Advanced this and that! And also a few ideas about a newsletter and a network. I'm actually loathe to be formal about this. I've seen networks destroyed at a stroke when there was no really good reason to sustain them, and when people felt that they had not had the opportunity to say what it was they wanted from it. As you can also see, I've put together a few ideas about how I see things, but it relies completely, this sort of thing, on collaboration and a reason for being! (present emphasis). I think we've got that, but I also think this first meeting and newsletter are important. I know you've got loads of other things on your mind, Sarah, but I do hope you'll be able to think about a few ideas for an entry in the newsletter and for the subsequent meeting.

I have finished, at last, the first draft of the thesis. I am really pleased with the sections on our work together and the parts with CC. In fact she turned out to be a godsend. Out of the blue she wrote to me to bring up some points about some conversations and writings (which you haven't read, I don't think - it concerns some of my early work with her last year). Amazing points. So I simply copied out her letter and replied to it, drawing together all the stuff that seemed still to be outstanding in the thesis as a whole. Jack clearly thinks it's a good piece of work. I now need to rewrite the introduction which I really ought to be getting round to now. I'm off to BERA on Thursday, however, and this week has been

spent largely helping CC with her dissertation.

...

Again, wishing you all the best. DO keep in touch, if only for a natter and to let me know how you are.

Love from Moira XXX

I wanted to keep in touch with students from 1992-1993. I believe that the work we had done together was educationally significant to us all and there might be a worth beyond simple friendship in corresponding. I had experienced what it meant to be asked by my own Ph.D. supervisor to critique his work: it seemed to demonstrate a democratisation of the learning process between supervisor and student (see Laidlaw, 1994b). I had found that process of democratisation educational so I wanted to offer that to my own students. I had already shown Sarah my work which explored our collaboration. I wanted to extend her access and the other students' to what I am doing.

To another student I wrote this about her final report as I had typed it up from its original handwritten form:

6.9.93. It's a lovely piece of work, Gail. Every time I read it it moves me very deeply. It is so full of the values that I came into Education to promote. It's a tour de force.

I enclose details about the network and the addresses of the other people I am trying to keep in touch with. I hope you feel that you want to be involved in keeping in touch. You know there's a meeting on 27th

November (a Saturday) at 3 o'clock. Sarah, Emma, Lara, Cath, Nigel, CC and Jack will be there. I do hope you can join us. The enclosed might give you an idea about the sorts of things you might want to contribute to a newsletter, for example. Or simply to talk about at the meeting. See what you think.

I also wanted to write to you to wish you luck in the teaching job. Have you started already? I'm sure you're going to be fine. I remember my first few days and weeks at Wenlock. Nerve-wracking but exhilarating somehow. I'm sure yours will be the same. I wish you all the luck in the world, Gail. And really hope to hear from you by the beginning of November, also with the news that you will be coming to the meeting!!

See you,

Moirá XXX

I wrote individual letters to all the action research group (1992/93) and enclosed this:

Newsletter

O.K. folks, this is it. Except it isn't! I haven't, obviously, got anything concrete yet, but I thought I would put a few ideas down. And set a deadline. We talked at the last meeting about having a newsletter for our 'network' and that it would be a good idea if I co-ordinated it. Whether or not you're thinking of undertaking an enquiry, it would be lovely to keep in touch with all your news about being a new teacher, or simply your ideas and experiences of what you're doing.

O.K., the questions I want to keep in mind are:

How can I facilitate in any way with new teachers as they induct themselves into the profession and try to improve the quality of learning with their pupils?

'How can I facilitate a network of new teachers?'

What have I been doing since I saw you last? Well, writing my thesis mostly. It's now in three parts. The first part deals with my ideas about education, what it's for, then there's a section about my work with CC. The second part is the study of my own educational development through a study of the literature and my work in particular with Sarah this year. The final part is a response to CC about a letter which she wrote to me about Part One. No doubt the whole thing will need tampering with. Jack doesn't like the introduction, but then, nor do I!

What do I want to do in the coming months?

Finish my thesis of course! I want to prepare your Final Reports for publication and rewrite the Guide ⁹. I'm also determined to consolidate the action research resources collection, not only the PG stuff but also the M.Ed. material. There's some cracking stuff there and I think it deserves a wider readership.

How will I do it?

Sheer plodding, I think. But also, practically I have an idea of getting all the material into the open through Jean McNiff's publishing company. ¹⁰ I wonder whether at our meeting on 27th November, at 3 o'clock, we can spend some time discussing what might be the best way of doing this. You

⁹This refers to the Initial Teacher Education Guide to Action Research which exists at the moment in mimeo form and which all the action research PG students received.

¹⁰This is Hyde Publications.

see, Jean suggested that in your papers, there would be real scope to punctuate the text she publishes with conversations we have about each one. Does that sound like a good idea? I think it is, but anyway, think about it. As this is your work I'm talking about here, I think there has to be a 'we' in the question, rather than simply an 'I'. As to the network, well, I can't do that on my own. You agreed at the last meeting to write something down which you would send to me and I would collate and send out to everyone before the meeting. How about getting ideas about anything from the above or your own educational stories that you think might be of interest to us, to me by the beginning of November? Word limit, no, not really, although I might have difficulty copying out 5,000 words for each of you!!!

Jean McNiff (1992) writes this about the value of sharing one's work within a network:

'The relationship between individuals who are all committed to this view is not grounded within power-structures, but in the trust of the one for the other to improve the quality of life for self and others.'
(p.62)

Seixas (1993) stresses the educational value of such a forum:

'students learn not only by actively making knowledge of their own but also by doing so within a community that shares a common culture.' (p 321)

When those others (as in my case) are students or ex-students there is a

potential power differential. In seeking criticism and comments on my work from these people, I aspire towards educative relationships with individuals 'who are all committed...to improv[ing] the quality of life for self and others'. And after all, as Socrates said:

'In education, an improvement has to be effected.' (p. 265)

C. 'We'.

'Universal self-consciousness arises only under certain conditions.

Individuals must belong to a community in which they are socialised mutually to claim and grant to each other the right to exercise their freedom within an...external sphere.' (Wood, 1990: 91)

Let me try this:

Community or Communion?:

Echoes...

I

If this thesis is partly an explanation of an aesthetic morphology within the significance to my educative relationships and more widely to my life, of being and being together, of care and attention to individuals; if it is about becoming and speaking for ourselves and helping others to do so in a language that is theirs as well as ours, then all of this is about the dialectic between communion and community. What is communion?

'To be with him was perfect harmony. We did not always need words like other people. Sometimes I used to watch siblings talking to each other

and wondered why they simply wouldn't listen with their inner ear, why they wouldn't let the silence speak as Dieter and I did. And then I knew it was because they could only communicate to each other in that way. They had no other recourse. It was only by comparison that I learnt how unusual was our love for each other.' (p.40)

And in my educative relationships it is love which is able to form the links in this dialectic. Love which is drawn out of my ontological spring and finds voice through the actions which draw people together and enable them to find their own ontology:

'I wondered how she (Katarina) might feel being in a strange country without the ability to speak the language and then remembered how it had been for me. Because of the friendliness of the people, because of the way in which they had treated me as a respected individual, I think I had almost experienced it as an advantage. Each interaction had had to be worked on so hard. Effort had been made when normally such situations would have occasioned no thought at all. It is only now that I begin to perceive the value of being made to communicate the simplest truths...And Ilse's answer came back to me from the time when I asked her about how it was that she spoke such good English...'By listening and hearing the real significance. Language is not just about words. It's also about use and habit, about private meanings and realities. By watching the eyes to see the meaning. That's how I've done it!' ' (p.34)

I think that's how I've tried to communicate with my students. And I want to foster interactions with students and others in education which will develop a sense of community, for in so doing I think we tap into our

essential humanity. We can be gripped, as CC and I were, by the power of being (Tillich, 1952) and by extension the power of becoming. I believe that the power of being is also communion with the humanity of others and at such a level Foucault's Power of Truth (1980) becomes a creative dialectic. In the power of integration between all the aspects of my practice to which I am trying to give a authentic voice in this writing, I am learning something about Tagore's (1913) insights that:

'Man seems deeply to be aware of a separation at the root of his being; he cries to be led across it to a union and somehow he knows that it is love which can lead him to a love which is final.' (p.227)

He goes on to say:

'Love is not a mere impulse, it must contain truth, which is law. It accepts limitations from truth because of its own inner wealth'. (p.227)

I am powerfully drawn to this because of the juxtaposition of love and truth and the dynamic between them. I believe that it is within this dynamic that a wholly positive power can emerge. A power which seeks to enhance the love and truth in any situation. This brings me to the heart of my own aesthetic sense and the synthesis I attempt to draw out of an educative relationship.

In 'Returning', Ilse the Elder, tells David:

'When Olaf was still a very small child, a neighbouring child stole his toy elephant. Olaf saw Matthias doing it. At first he was very cross with him,

but when later that same evening he heard the child's father scolding him for simply making a noise in the village square, he began to feel very sorry for him. He went home and wrapped up another toy and walked over to Matthias' house and gave it to him. The two are now inseparable friends and always will be.' (p.10)

Recently I have started acting as critical friend to Justine who is in her second year of teaching at Wootton Bassett school near Swindon. She is entering an action enquiry for an Advanced Certificate. On 7.10.93. Jack Whitehead and I went to see the group of which she is a member and I helped her clarify her initial question. She seemed very stressed about the implications of her question and so I immediately wrote to her to express this concern, but also to suggest areas of development for her enquiry:

7.10.93.

Dear Justine.

What a treat to be working with you again. Sorry I couldn't come back for supper, but I really wasn't feeling too good. You were looking better than I saw you at the end of last term. (I suppose a trip to South East Asia for five weeks is bound to make some difference! I'm pea-green with envy!!) You were stressed, though, it seemed to me and I suppose that's why I wanted to write to you, so quickly. I know I'll be seeing you for that drink on Monday, but I wanted to put down some ideas we talked about this evening.

Am I right in thinking that much of the stress is due to undertaking an enquiry which probes at the heart of your values...?

I really felt for you this evening. It's important that you express this frustration (if I'm right about it) and then recognise that 'bite-sized' chunks is all we can take on.

I don't know how much you're going to like this idea, but I think we trust each other and so I'm going to risk it. When Jack and the others were talking you wrote down your question on a piece of paper: 'How can I do what I know is right when I am not allowed to?' We laughed about the question, so simply worded, and yet profound in its implications. Bear with me when I say I think it has two fundamental shortcomings built into it, and that if you run with that question it will become self-limiting.

'How can I do what I know is right, when I'm not allowed to?

If you do not explore what you believe you know, you will not develop. Jack constantly reminds me of the danger of dogmatism. If you were to alter 'know' to something more exploratory for the time being, then this action enquiry could take upon itself a justification of those values which are implied by 'I know'. By understanding why these values matter to you and why they could matter to others, you can win through reality and not rhetoric. You would evolve your own standards of judgement which are less refutable than, 'well, I simply know!' The other point is about the focus. In this question, where are the pupils? Of course you have to resolve something of this tension because otherwise you are not going to be able bring out the best in yourself and in your pupils. And after talking to you again on Thursday, I was so moved by the reasons for your concern, your genuine commitment to comprehensive education as a process of democratisation. Yet again I was reminded why working with

you is so good and wholesome. Let's talk about this on Monday or whenever.

Lots of love, Moira.XXX

As a critical friend to Justine I hoped to express something of my concern through a concentration of the issues of values which her particular enquiry would probably give rise to. The contentious nature of her proposed enquiry needed to be looked at carefully. I wanted to alert her to the 'dangers' at the same time as the responsibilities she would necessarily incur in an individually-orientated action enquiry. I recognised, perhaps to a greater extent than she, the implications of such an undertaking. I knew from working with her through previous ethical issues, that she would be concerned about the pupils, and yet in her question I could not see that concern. This seemed to be a contradiction in her espoused value of always taking pupils' needs seriously. This is not written judgementally about Justine, simply as a reconstruction of the reasoning that led me to write to her in the way I did. I felt it was grounds to challenge her on. That I wrote back straight away and showed an interest in the other things we discussed that afternoon would reveal my respect for her.

II

...Within Echoes...

'So at once I was a king being crowned who dreamt of his own exile and saw that it must be so.' (p.56)

A few weeks ago, Kevin Eames (Head of English at Wootton Bassett School) who was present at the Validation Meeting of an earlier draft of Part Three, came to see Jack Whitehead, also his Ph.D. supervisor, about

the progress of his own Ph.D. thesis. He felt he needed a respondent with whom he could explore the living dialectical processes of his own educational development as he comes to terms with this final stage of the thesis. I have developed a great respect for Kevin's ability to hold firm to his democratic principles in the light of external pressures which might seek to quell his voice and the voices of his pupils. It was therefore without hesitation that I offered to be his correspondent. We arranged to write to each other about the final chapter.

I read Chapter Eight again as a preparation, and then read his Introduction to Chapter Nine to which I was to make a response. We were hoping this would act as a springboard for him to understand better his own conclusions and insights and reveal them in the rest of the chapter; for me this is an exciting correspondence through which I am learning about the significance of trying to begin from someone else's starting point, to help only where specifically asked, to challenge, and yet enable the other to have complete ownership of the outcome. This was some of my response to the Introduction:

6.9.93.

Dear Kevin,

...I am aware of how important it is to craft a response to what you have written which does justice to your insights, takes on what you have said and challenges where appropriate, and perhaps more importantly on one level, shows how it is becoming educational to me, if indeed it is. I take these qualities (your educational insights, appropriate challenges, educational potential) from the words you used at the end: 'How do you

feel about the territory I have set out?’ and ‘What do you want me to explain?’. I see these as being challenges for me in which I have the opportunity to enhance the dialectical potential of this correspondence through an authentic exploration of the issues which you raise and which through them, I can raise. Is that how you see it? At one point you said:

‘The main thing that’s kept me from writing...is the feeling that...after having experienced what a dialectical form of educational knowledge was like...I was worried that...I would have to write in a propositional rather than a dialectical form.’

...The dialectic grows out of time, doesn’t it? It is more difficult to create because when preparing a work of the kind that you and I have been involved with evolving, because of the intense negotiation that a dialectic in education requires. You want to avoid the propositional, you say, because:

‘I’m getting to the stage where writing within a dialectical form, but without someone to communicate with... seems unbearably artificial - a solitary voice echoing hollowly in a confined space.’

With echoes there is only a fading similarity. Uniformity of expression, input, intended outcome - all these are the limitations, as I think we both perceive them, of proposition. Dialectics offer us (and that’s the key word - us) variety. Less chance of in-breeding and idiot offspring! Propositions take the stance of final truth. Have you read Kincheloe’s ‘Teachers as Researchers: Qualitative Enquiry as a Path to Empowerment’? (Kincheloe, 1991) It’s a fascinating book. The best one I’ve read about the dangers of propositional knowledge...We need to evolve forms of

representation that don't stymie the natural unfolding of knowledge and understanding and its evolution into educational theory. Propositions give us an apparent power over our material. Let's look at that. 'Power'. 'Over'. 'Material'. Power to what end and for whose benefit? 'Over'? Why not 'with'? And our pupils, students, colleagues, known or not, can never be subsumed under the language of 'material'. 'What material is this? It is the living fabric which stitches together, over time, people's individuality and social networks. Their lives.

On the telephone you mentioned about not knowing where this correspondence would go, and hinted, I believe, at a sense of destabilisation. I replied, I think, that for it to be a truly educative dialectic, both of us would have to be learning from the exchange. Quite rightly you ask me what I need to know. What do I need to know? And my question from this is: 'How can I express what it is I need to know in a way which enables us both to develop the learning we need?' I don't want my 'need to know' to limit yours...

Are you in effect saying in your writing that there is a direct relationship between the dialectical educational knowledge in which you wish to be engaging with others and a particular approach to teacher professionalism, which you see embodied in a proposed General Education Council?

...Sorry if these thoughts seem random and foolish. I think what Pete Mellett said is true, that we find in other people's words, our own thoughts and questions, our own unanswered quests. I feel beleaguered by a sense of compromise in the way in which I express my own thinking. It really doesn't do justice to my intuitions. I don't have CC's ability to

express the soul directly as she seems to. It's that hiatus between the inner experienced world and its outer expression that confuses me. But that, I think, is probably my problem and not necessarily relevant. (As I said before, please edit this and treat all future correspondence exactly as it suits you.)

...Parts of my thesis I am happy with. Your writing has shown me again the importance of bearing the reader in mind when presenting my insights. In the first part of my text, I am so concerned about getting down what I think I know, that I miss the point. A dialectical form of educational knowledge demands uncertainty, but an uncertainty with rigour and discipline and educative intent. When those are fused, it seems to me there is the potential for a generative educative dialectic. If education is a living art form, then all parts of it - people, intentions, processes, outcomes, context - all these are fused and they are fused (for our purposes in the present writing for example) in the readers' minds as they experience our understanding and between us as our ideas converge, merge and diverge. There is so much to achieve, then, when striving for a representational authenticity. That seems to be one of your aims too...

Best Wishes,

Moir. XXX

In the sense that I address not only some of Kevin's points, but some of my own. For example in this one:

'When does compromise in personal knowledge become damaging? Is this correspondence actually treading over the line between compromise and meaning?'

and especially:

'I feel beleaguered by a sense of compromise in the way in which I express my own thinking. It really doesn't do justice to my intuitions. I don't have CC's ability to express the soul directly as she seems to. It's that hiatus between the inner experienced world and its outer expression that confuses me. But that, I think, is probably my problem and not necessarily relevant. (As I said before, please edit this and treat all future correspondence exactly as it suits you.)'

I believe our correspondence has the potential to be mutually beneficial. There is no sense in which I am simply helping Kevin. I am helping myself. We are helping each other.

I wrote in my Ph.D. log:

8.9.93. I am enjoying the challenge of writing to people about their work. But this business of personal knowledge. How much of our knowledge should be predicated upon personal responsibility? How can I communicate what I perceive as a necessary fusion between the ethics of what I do and the ways in which I represent it? If I am trying to help others clarify their thinking, that is only all right as long as I am trying to clarify my own. The educative relationships I enjoy with people like Kevin and Jacqui and Peter are predicated upon an absolute equality. We are all seekers after something. I have to be in an interactive process which is generative and which isn't in any way one-sided in terms of control and power. I can't begin to understand all the intricacies of

another person's reality. All I can do is try my very best to communicate what I understand by what s/he says or writes in good faith. I have at all times to remain critically open to my own motives and conclusions. Especially those I vouchsafe to others. I want to generate a form of educational correspondence in which an absolute equality is a central part of the epistemology of our actions'

I am concerned about the possible outcomes of this:

'Everyone seemed to know me. A few people called out a greeting to me, adding my name to whatever was said, so that I would know that I was addressed. I felt almost as if I were royalty being taken on a tour of my own kingdom...I felt that there I could become anything I pleased, as long as I really wanted it. In those moments I was a king.' (p.10)

I want to experience as much as possible a full mutuality of regard, respect and challenge in my educative relationships. I want to be no one's expert but my own. I think in the following extracts from Kevin's Ph.D. and my response to it can be seen a greater reciprocity within an educational research process.

I could identify with Kevin's dilemma (about integrating a dialectical form of representation within his ideas about it) and enable it to help me to distil my own enquiry and in the next two extracts (one from his developing Ph.D. and my response to it) you should gain a greater impression of the mutuality of this educational correspondence.

'I don't think, if it's truly dialectical [the text] that this piece of writing

can be responded to in the same way as a piece of propositional writing.

But then again, the response may be different and unexpected. With dialectics you never know, do you?’

He goes on to a discussion of Carr and Kemmis’ ‘Becoming Critical’ in relation to the dialectical knowledge which they purport to be promoting:

‘The elements of a dialectical form of educational knowledge, as I grew to understand them in the course of my enquiry, are entirely lacking, in that there is no evidence of contradiction or of provisionality, or of relation to practice, or of learning through dialogue, or of existing within a dialogical community, or even of ‘tests’ for dialectics which I evolved and explored in Chapters Three to Five when I was looking at the idea from the outside, in a propositional way.

Thus the authors fail to practice the approach they advocate, and to use your phrase in your last letter, there is consequently a lack of ‘representational authenticity’. If they say action research is so good and that it’s a dialectical form of knowing rather than a propositional form, what does it tell us about the (unarticulated) assumptions and understandings of the authors that they choose to write in a propositional rather than a dialectical form? At the very least it suggests to me that they see a dialectical form as being lower in status than the conventionally academic approach they actually take. We’re back with the contradiction on the interview with X, in that even friendly academics who are well-disposed towards teachers’ action research seem to make assumptions about power relationships which place propositional knowledge on a higher level of status than the dialectical knowledge of teachers.

(However I don't want to appear morally superior about this; you may recall that I was, myself, writing about dialectics, rather than writing dialectically for the greater part of this enquiry.' (Chapter Nine, p.11)

I wrote back to him on the day of receiving his draft:

I think the end of the second paragraph needs drawing out in some way. It seems important. Why do I say that? Do we slip into propositional forms because it seems cosy and expected and makes us feel in charge of our own worlds? Who was it who said that we need 'to strip away the crippling mutilations of centuries of objectivist thought'?...Polanyi (1958)... It seems that there is an underlying predisposition to represent experience in a packaged form because it makes the representer appear powerful and it makes the experience appear contained and fully understood. Do you remember our conversation on the 'phone (I was in Yorkshire) and you said you felt apprehensive about where your work might go? Isn't that something to do with the fact that with dialectics you don't control the discourse? With propositions you do. And it's not only control, it's also what's expected from academics who have controlled the knowledge since the church's hold on it was weakened.

Is there any sense that as you have developed this dialectical approach in this chapter you are beginning to think differently as well and perceiving your experience differently? Is it not possible that this approach is showing, as you do it, the effect of dialectics on to reality and knowledge? That you can say now, that 'you never know with dialectics', and this is exciting. Knowledge itself, if you can imagine it as a living and growing 'entity', has just received a shot in the arm, so to speak. Knowledge that is

drawing sustenance, growing and reproducing, living a life which is dedicated to exploration, finding out, on some journey which can never be predestined, but which develops an understanding of possible destinations, always open to change and modification. You wrote once about growing your own (Eames, 1990). Is this significantly different? I think I can claim that your stepping into a dialectical form of representation (which is also an exploration of meaning) has changed what you are writing about, how you are writing about it and the epistemology and significance of what you (we) are engaged in. I notice a difference in your style and I've already written in this letter about what I think your style means. I am aware that what I am saying here may be the most important aspect of any of my writing to you to date. I think I am perceiving an educational and epistemological transformation directly as a result of your dialectical approach. Was this not an aim? Is not wishing for our understanding of the world to be possibly transformed through our educational processes part of what we're in education for (if that transformation enables us to lead fuller and more productive lives, I mean)? Can I say that? I am really excited by what I have read of your work, Kev. It's stretching me to the limits of my capacity to integrate former insights with present ones, because, you see, I keep thinking, yeah, I can see now the significance of this dialectical form and how I can integrate this into my own Ph.D. Part Four, for example. I really feel that I am grappling with some profoundly meaningful ideas as I read what you have written. As you are showing what it means to put together your own knowledge in a dialectical form, to show what is new about what you have achieved, I find within that resonances about my own efforts to do the same. At the same time I am, as you are, remembering audience and the commitments we have made to come to an understanding of the

world, responsibly, and with universal intent, but together too.

I need to do more thinking about this whole area of how dialectical knowledge can contribute to communities. We are individuals who choose to come together and share and modify our views of and on the world (our epistemologies). This creates not only new knowledge but a view of community. It opens up, it seems to me anyway, perceptible connections between professionalism, educational knowledge, and responsibility. These are larval thoughts. There's something in that, but I need to explore it.

What I find significant about this correspondence is the way in which educational development through a dialectical form can be traced. Because Kevin has taken the plunge into a dialectical form of representation, his understanding of its benefits seem to be accruing (*'you never know with dialectics, do you?'*) This reminds me of Eisner (1993) saying that:

'poetic forms of meaning require poetic forms of representation.' (p.7)

I believe (as I have stated in Part Two, hopefully demonstrated in Part Three and reiterated at the beginning of this section in my own list of requirements for educational narratives) that dialectical forms of meaning require dialectical forms of representation. As Kevin seeks 'representational authenticity' we engage in correspondence in an effort to understand. We engage. And through engaging with Kevin's ideas in this way, in which equality and parity of esteem are cornerstones (this correspondence having been entered into freely on both sides) I too come to new understandings. Not only about the links between professionalism

and educational knowledge, but also the beginnings of perceptions about links between our educational knowledge and responsibility. Without knowing it consciously, I was embarked upon a journey towards understanding that would culminate in a thesis which seems to be synthesising reflection and action. And all the while this understanding is being generated within a community, one to which I feel a great degree of commitment. Hegel (1821) called such a commitment: *'Pflichten der Verhältnisse'*, or 'duties of relationships', and brings into this commitment an ethical dimension which I am pleased to accept as integral. Wood (1990) describes the ethics of commitment to a particular cause thus:

'Ethical life involves...commitment - a disposition to choose acts that forego your own well-being to some degree for the sake of something you care about more than that...Commitment is not selflessness, though. It is not a case where self-interest is overridden by some universal moral principle such as utility or the categorical imperative...Morality tries in vain to provide an ethical theory of duties, but a theory of this kind can only exist in relationships that are necessary through the idea of freedom, and hence in their whole range are only actual in the state. Our ethical duties are the demands made on us by other individuals and by institutions through the relationships in which we stand within a rational society, an ethical order.' (p.211)

Intuitively I felt that it was wholly appropriate to respond to Kevin's request to form a correspondence with him about his work. Now our work. I am beginning to recognise the educational and ethical issues involved by so doing. And within this understanding my recognition of

what is for me a necessary synthesis between ethical and educational practice is growing. I am recognising the responsibility which I have perceived as ontological is also an aspect of how I can judge the educational quality of my relationships. Ethics, linked to ontology seem now to be moving towards a theory of educational knowledge. If I act with others in ways which grow out my own progressively conscious ontology and these ways impinge on others ethically and educationally, then I would appear to be evolving a theory of educational practice whose standards of judgement would be those by which I would judge my own existence. I will develop this idea for the rest of the thesis.

Another M.Ed. student, Jacqui, worked with me last year when I was coming to terms with the violation I alluded to in Part One (in the section entitled: 'Who is this particular I?'). In fact she crafted our correspondences into an action research assignment for herself (Stephens, 1992). I have come to trust without question her ability to act in my best interest and to offer me the sort of respect within our educative relationship which Yamamoto (1990) writes about in reference to the mentoring process. When we talked together in the Summer (1993), I offered to act as critical friend for her dissertation in which she is searching for the standards of judgement by which she wishes her work in education to be evaluated. We exchanged a couple of letters and then she wrote this:

26.9.93.

Hi Fellow Traveller (or just hi, Moira!)

You are quite right about what a reader brings to a text. You have to be in the right frame of mind, 'receptive' is, I think, the right word...You state

that by fostering organic growth in others, we encourage it in ourselves. I completely agree, for any interaction either written or spoken must by its very nature affect us. It is the verbalisation allowing one's views to develop. To take Dewey's mediaeval cathedrals, it is perhaps the making of the bricks, which in turn will make the structure. You responded to my referral 'to thine own self be true' as a strength you feel I have. Some people may find it uncomfortable as I tend to speak my mind, although I have learnt how to say it...If I understand you right, you are saying that by supporting others through educative relationships, both the guided and the guide grow. Is that right? It's what Yamamoto (1991:184/5) claims...

To sum up: Yamamoto was quite right. I cannot explain it better. It sums up the interaction between 'seeing' individuals. It describes for me the organic nature of educative development, true to oneself and respecting the other. The words I find profound...

You then go on to say that my outer self will be: 'mirrored by inner patterns, polished, shining, glowing with inner security and firm in the knowledge that life is hope. You are, I believe, right when you refer to me as knowing myself, who I am and what I stand for...

In many ways I have explored more deeply my definition of the organic nature of educative development which was useful. I guess I have not thought about an inner and outer me.

Are we about to go where no one has gone before, to seek out new ideas, to form new theories? In many ways our journey is in a spaceship and we can easily get trapped in a time-warp. There is perhaps an important

message here. It has been said that no man is an island; we are influenced, change, grow and develop because of the influences of our experiences and people are an important part of that. If we are to do this, we cannot afford to be an island or trapped in a time-warp, for it will stifle our very being; in the end we will die, having given nothing and having received nothing. The greatest of these is giving because having given, we have received. What I believe you term the 'inner', does indeed become polished and glow...

*Love,
Jacqui.*

Again in my journal I wrote this:

'30.9.93. In the kind of work I now doing voluntarily with various people, many of them Jack's students, some of them my own past students, where I feel that there are glimmers of a community emerging through the quality of the individual contact. At the moment with Jack's students there are individuals and me. Together we are exploring all sorts of values and actions and the relationships between them. And I mean 'we'. That's the point. There is in all this endeavour an incipient 'we' which is a natural unfolding of the potential for individuals to grow together. To become. Being together as a process of becoming. Might there possibly here be the strongest community of all? In which there is only mutual respect, warmth of regard and careful challenge, in which genuine exploration reaches out to see who else is there in this space? Me, together with Peter, Jacqui, Kevin, Justine. and others. At the moment it's a bit like my kingdom, though, and I believe in democracy. I will keep

writing, keep exploring, keep caring. There's something about power here:

'Ilse named you as village elder,' Christiane said softly. 'We would have told you last night. All the villagers know. And they're delighted. You've become quite a legend here. Stories abound about you.'

'But there must be some mistake,' I said. This was the wrong way round. Schwerentin was my dream. I could not be theirs! (p.55)

I do not just wish to be a personal focus, or to focus personally on others, although of course the personalities involved in any process are its cornerstones. In no way do I wish to overlook the complex possibilities within personalities. But the focus seems to me also ought to be upon something which does not as yet exist, and which might never exist, but which our vision might possibly give birth to. It is something composed of individuals and yet embracing a community which defies prior stipulation:

'There was never a moment when I was tempted to play this dangerous game, and I knew I had to start being honest now...I still seem to be the focus for people's intentions and yet our decisions are made very much in negotiation. I knew early on that I did not want to be at the head of Schwerentin, but at its heart.' (p.65)

III

...Within Echoes.

'I had experienced it and carried my feelings about it with me at all times. It had informed every interaction between my soul and myself, between

my persona and the real person beneath the mask. Schwerentin had both been me and created me.' (p.49)

CC has written this in her dissertation:

'In my description of a preferred style of educational management, I want you to notice that I do not use the words 'theory' or 'model'. It is the process itself.' (p.120)

As part of my facilitation of CC's work, I immersed myself in the philosophy of Lao Tzu and his Tao Te Ching. I did it because I wanted to communicate with her in a way she had already suggested to me was akin to her own way of thinking:

'For Lao Tzu, reality exists and continues to exist at a level prior to all names. It is, simply, without qualification. The effect of language is to break up, fragment, and splinter what in itself remains unbroken...It can be a guidepost as long as we do not mistake it for what is signified.'

(Wing Tsit, 1963: 297)

In my letter to CC of 7.9.93. quoted above, I ended with these words:

In a sense, again, you have attempted to give names to those aspects of our existence which are essentially unnameable.

I had just re-read the 'Tao Te Ching' and these lines in particular resonated:

*The tao that can be told
is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named
is not the eternal Name.*

*The unnameable is the eternally real
Naming is the origin
of all particular things.
(Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching)*

'I was staring at the village, at the trees drifting in the breezes, at the golden sunshine enriching the hues around me, at the peaceful people going about their daily lives as if each movement meant something, as if the movements themselves were as important as the places to which they were walking.' (p.18)

And of course the movements do mean something. I believe that each movement I make in the world has the potential to mean something. As an educator it is important that my movements are considered and careful, that their intentions are both expressions in harmony with, and yet simultaneously creative of, what Whitehead and McNiff would call 'a good social order' and what I have called my golden tapestry; for it is, I believe, an order that contains the social order but extends into the realms of being itself. To concern oneself with being is to be concerned with the social order, for the social order is an expression of being and being an expression of the social order. Whitehead concerns himself with that

social order through the engagement of individuals in attempts to improve their practice within the social context; I concern myself with reaching a state of being individually, and communally through facilitating enquiries into self and other, and through a philosophy in which love and truth are mutually dependent. It is in the dialectic between being and an improvement in the social context where educational Action Research resides, the 'I' (being) and the 'improvement' (social context) in a constant state of interaction and development. It is an necessarily unresolvable tension. It is a tension which creates its own aesthetic morphology. I am contending that when the action research cycle is grounded in values to do with social justice, democratic processes and enabling others to fulfil their existential and educational potential (which is what I try to do with my students) then the resulting aesthetic value of such a process is equivalent to a great work of art which also seeks (amongst other things) to recognise the universal in human nature and to enable us all to understand ourselves better.

On 15.1.93. I wrote:

'It is not simply that emancipatory action research insists upon concerns which fit into the shared notions of the above concerns (democratic values etc.) but the process itself has within it a natural potential to realise these principles. And this also resonates with the idea that the individual aspect should mirror the whole. In this case I believe I have an instance here when this is the case. It shows verisimilitude of philosophy and method (an inner consistency); it releases my own potential for democratic action. It is an aspect which can be drawn upon to explain the whole...My being drawn to Action Research, then, was

understandable given my aesthetic experiences with Literature, music and my educative relationships. I am aware that my educative life seeks to live out practically what I perceive in my aesthetic experiences with music. In other words... emancipatory action research has within it the potential to become a practical realisation of doing good in the world, which I see as central to living out my values. Given that I have chosen to see life as meaningful.

On 14.10.93. I received another letter from Jacqui which confirmed my sense of the necessary grounding within communion between individuals if we are ever to move towards community:

13.10.93.

Dear Moira,

It is good to find that we are in accord. There is something very comforting in that and reciprocal. Your letter reminded me of how you described my mentoring of you in your writings. You said something about me empathising/concurring with you and then very gently challenging. I felt on reading your letter, that was exactly what you have done. It leaves one feeling good and confident about the challenge.

I believe that good relationships, and they have to be educative, allow those involved to grow, develop, change and gain confidence. Embedded within all of this are the values and beliefs I know we share...

Your letter really did spur me on. It really did clarify. The whirlpool I found myself in has dissipated and allowed me to continue down stream,

or into the galaxy of true knowledge and life. Thanks for that...

In the TES this week there were two articles by Headteachers who had undergone a pilot OFSTED Inspection. One had been a 'good' experience and one a 'bad'. I have analysed the two articles and one thing I am sure of is that the Head that felt the school had a good experience approached it with the right attitude. It was positive, encouraging to his staff and was in it the opportunity to improve and move forward. After reading it I had a warm feeling. It was as it should be. It stood for the 'good' things I believe. I know I need to ensure that I behave in a way that will leave the staff I come into contact with during an Inspection feeling the same. The challenge, of course, is to do it! Take care, Love Jacqui.

In particular I believe that the above letter demonstrates an educational correspondence in which affirmation of the worth of the other is central. In which action and reflection are seen to be mutually enhancing (Day, 1993; Smyth, 1986). There is the recognition of the vital nature of action motivated from a secure basis of regard and interest. It also shows a clear educational intention for the future, a process which lies at the heart of action research processes (Whitehead, 1989b). It demonstrates something of the transformatory ability to be found in educational dialogue, which Elliott (1989) describes in relation to Whitehead's educational theory thus:

'Dialogue is an important context for developing, as well as validating, educational theory of the kind that Whitehead describes. In dialogue, teachers are able to utilize reflectively, not only the repertoires of personal experience which originate in their own life histories, but also the experiences of each other.' (p.97)

I believe I am doing more than I have set out immediately above. I think that I grasp an essential paradox at the heart of all being (that is meaningfulness and meaninglessness) in the educative relationships I foster within a process of action enquiry. I have to pay due attention to detail by paying attention to the whole. And in a sense by that I mean, by paying attention to individuals, by holding firm to the possibilities within human relationships to reach a state of communion one with the other, even when that has not by any means been my only experience, then communities are formed. Not in name but in reality.

Much of the work I am engaging in at the moment is concerned with the next World Congress in Action Research. In connection with the Congress I have written to date over fifty personal letters to people all over the world. During this Academic year I have written countless letters to the PGCE students about their action enquiries. Once, and once only, I circulated a letter to various students, changing bits of information within it to suit the particular reader. With Emma's letter I was careless and overlooked several details. I knew at the time it was unwise to duplicate. She remarked on my lack of care in this instance at an evaluation meeting on 29.6.93. as the only negative aspect for her of the whole of my facilitation. It still rankled with her:

'We are often bitter with those who disappoint our highest expectations, after all.' (p.56)

Since she left the University and has started teaching full-time, I wrote to her again:

7.9.93.

Dear Emma,

I thought I would write and wish you the very best of luck in your new job at Oakham School. I heard from Lara the other night and she gave me your school address, so I thought I'd drop you a line and enclose some of the bumph (bumf?) about the network and the addresses. I hope everything is going fine. I'm sure it will be, although I remember my own stomach-butterflies on the first day. Soon settled down though. I was too busy to have much time to think.

It's been a busy summer, as you'll see if you read the enclosed. It feels good to have a draft of the thesis done, although I am sure that every time I look at it I'm going to find things that need doing. I based much of Part One (there are four parts) on my work with Sarah. Sarah liked it which meant a lot to me. It's not much good me writing about someone if they don't recognise their own processes in it. She seems to think I have managed that. CC took me to task that students aren't speaking enough in their own voices though, which is why I have finished the thesis with a letter to her. She really is a remarkable woman. She is now finishing off her own dissertation and I can tell you, it's wonderful!

Anyway, enough of all that. You're into real children and real classrooms at the moment, I imagine. All this 'floating in the clouds' probably sounds inappropriate. I do wish you luck, Emma, but I sincerely believe that you will do a good job. I really enjoyed the time I saw you in action in the classroom. I saw a stimulating, well-prepared and charismatic

teacher who knows how to get the best out of her pupils. The school is lucky to have you.

...

Jack is well and sends his regards. Do keep in touch and I really hope you'll come to the meeting in November and send something for the newsletter. See what you think, anyway. Oh yes, and this letter is unique. I have learnt my lesson and haven't sent it to anyone else!!!

Lots of love,

Moirira. XXX

Forgetting an insight upon which I had tried to build my work in education - i.e. treating Emma as if she were not unique - was not a simple error. Symbolically it stands at the heart of a lack of understanding of what it means to be that other. I perceive a need to harness a quality of empathy in my work with other individuals.

I intend to write many more personally-orientated letters for the Congress. In particular I want to encourage individuals from as wide a spectrum of ethnic, experiential and geographical backgrounds as possible to attend and contribute to the event:

'I looked around and there was not a face I recognised and yet they were not strangers. I have long since learnt anyway that it is only from people we love that we create strangers. These people were my people. I felt that as strongly in that moment as I had ever had before in my life, anywhere, even in Schwerentin. I knew that even in the whisper of despair about Ilse's death, about the fact that I was too late for something fundamentally

important, I was in the only place I wanted to be. Schwerentin was not an illusion. I didn't know what it was, but an unrealisable dream was out of the question now.' (p.53)

For the moment, however, I will share two correspondences with you, for each of them in their own way, represents the heart of my educational and ontological values:

28.9.93.

Dear Professor Ely,

Strange to call you that when in my mind I picture you as 'I, Margot'! (This alludes to her paper originally given at the CARN Conference and acting as the basis for a collaborative set of papers which Hyde Publications subsequently published (Ely, 1993). Anyway, Professor Ely, I am writing to you on behalf of Jack Whitehead who is convening the forthcoming World Congress on Action Research, Action Learning and Process Management here at the University from 6-9 July, 1994. I do hope that you will be able to come. Perhaps organise a symposium, a workshop or papers. I am enclosing details which should be useful.

I am one of Jack's Ph.D. students (writing up). My thesis is about evaluating the quality of my educative relationships with my Initial Teacher Education students through something I am terming an aesthetic morphology. I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you how much I have valued your writing during these three years. I especially loved the CARN critical conversations no.5. Jack returned from the CARN conference at which you gave a talk buzzing about rhetoric and the power

of the orator. Those talks about your address have been central to getting together my own ideas about the place of rhetoric and representation in educational narratives. What you have to say about narrative in educational writing has always struck a chord with me. Maintaining authenticity within oneself and as guardian of it for the other when representing multifaceted experiences is really hard to do. 'Circles within Circles' has also been very helpful in that respect.

In due course (when I can siphon off a copy from the photocopiers) I would like to send you a copy of a dissertation of one of Jack's M.Ed. students whom I helped to tutor. CC Lin comes from Taiwan to where she has just returned. Her dissertation is an appeal to the deep and hidden mythologies beneath the carapace we armour ourselves with against the world. It is called, 'Action Research: a Process of Becoming'. This is her abstract:

This thesis attempts to bring life to the writer's educational development as a process of becoming through an action research approach by asking the kind of question, 'How do I improve?..In finding a form, a way of articulating the unnameable, this thesis is presented in an experimental form in terms of the mythological scenario and the employment of metaphorical devices. It hopes to explicate the art of a dialectician who holds together both the one and the many that is being constituted by a reflective conversation within the writer's inner selves in harmony with the environment. One of the distinctive features of this thesis is the understanding of an aesthetic standard of judgement which can be used to test the validity of a claim to know an individual's educational development as a form of art.

There is something within CC's work which goes beyond any representation of an individual's educational development that I have

ever seen. She takes as her theme the juxtaposition of the meaninglessness with the meaningfulness of life and sees how that conflict has affected her own insights this year on the course: she had a tough year.

It's been a real pleasure writing to you. I hope I will see you next year at the Congress. Please don't hesitate to get in touch should there be anything I can help you with.

Warmest regards,

Moira Laidlaw

(Sort of Congress Administrator)

Because of my reading and, I hope, understanding of her work (Ely, 1991, 1993) I felt that the slightly risky tone of the letter would be met with acceptance, perhaps even pleasure. This seemed to be the case when I received a handwritten reply in which she offered to open up a dialogue with me on ways of formalising communication between 'strangers' at the Congress next year. I have since written back.

I also wrote to Colin Henry whom I met in 1992 when he was visiting the University.

27.9.93.

Dear Colin,

I am writing on behalf of Jack Whitehead to enclose details of the forthcoming World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research and

Process Management which is being jointly convened by Professor Pamela Lomax of Kingston University, London, and Jack here at Bath. With your extensive experience in the first two world congresses I hope that you will be able to contribute to these proceedings.

I enjoyed meeting you last year when you came to Bath and thought that you might also be interested in the enclosed flier about Jack's new book which has just been published by Hyde Publications (Jean McNiff's publishing house). I also wanted to say how much I enjoyed your contribution to the CARN Critical Conversations. Collective Autonomy! Absolutely. A few additional oxymorons spring to mind. What about 'uncertain positivists' or even 'contented Ph.D. students!' (The latter, you might gather, is a personally heartfelt comment!)

I do hope to hear from you soon. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if there is anything I can help you with.

Best Wishes,

'[The ideal would be that] people would have to know personally every member of the community, and those days are long gone, except for here in Schwerentin. I have long since believed that only in very small communities can one have the quality of communication necessary to promote true comradeship.' (p.11)

I can't know everyone I write to for the Congress, but I can pay attention to detail. I can interact with them in ways which suggest my genuine desire to communicate, always in the hope that something will grow organically

and reach a mature flowering. By caring about individuals I care about communities and the link there is communion mediated through love. My golden tapestry is threaded with love, a concern for truth, and a desire to communicate both of them. The highest aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships is my ontology realised within human interactions to enable us to lead better lives. It is a love of humanity which spurs me on, a love which is grounded in an ontology balanced between pain and joy, within the paradox at the heart of all human existence. As an individual exercising the right to act from my own point of view, responsibly, and with universal intent:

*'I seize that paradox
and in so doing
tip the balance
from nothingness
to being,
and from being,
to being together,
and from being together
to becoming
and from becoming to becoming together'.*

(Ph.D. Journal)

For as the Tao Te Ching states:

*The Tao gives birth to One.
One gives birth to Two.*

Two gives birth to Three.

Three gives birth to all things.

I want to present you now with one final excerpt from 'Returning'. It is a pivotal one for it comes right at the end of the novel. And within it, I believe that I express a fundamental orientation to my reality, whether expressed in education or within my life as a whole:

'Sometimes it is hard to allow the flux of our lives and intentions (which after all, are our destinies as well) simply to flow. It is hard not to mix up self-interest with intention, not to confuse desire with need and wishes with rights. Whatever I had found in Schwerentin, I belonged to it and it to me. Whatever had drawn me to this place had kept me faithful for twenty years and it was real. It had enriched my existence beyond the telling and now I owed it a debt of gratitude which only with my life could I repay...

... I had come full circle. I had come home.' (p.60)

I think this final quotation from 'Returning' shows clearly the values with which I have imbued Schwerentin. I find in certain phrases an articulation of what synthesises for me the four aspects of my practice in education. I will now present these phrases and then say how and why they are significant.

The fictional Schwerentin stands as a metaphor for the desire that I set out in the Introduction to Part Three: to fuse in spirit and in practice my ontology (allowing the flux of our lives to flow), my educational

knowledge (not to confuse desire with needs and wishes with rights) which I seek to live out, with the ethics (I owed it a debt of gratitude which only with my life could I repay) within my educative relationships.

Let me take each of those phrases in turn and defend its symbolism. What has my ontology to do with 'allowing the flux of our lives to flow'? I hope that I have shown in this section that for me the theory of my own being is concerned with accessing a state of existence which enhances my sense of value both of myself and other human beings. It is a state of being which perceives the value of humanity and my place in it. It is also one which sees responsibility to others as pivotal within human relationships.

And what has 'not to confuse desire with needs and wishes with rights' to do with my educational knowledge? My theory of educational knowledge is created from attempts to live out a role as an educator in which I enable myself and others to come to responsible perceptions of the world through communication evolved within educative relationships. I perceive it as axiomatic that responsible perceptions of the world include those in which valuing the worth of others is central. I believe I can only effect this educative communication through a conscious synthesis of the ontological, ethical, aesthetic as well as educational principles which have been described and explained within this thesis.

Pivotal is, I believe, the ethical dimensions of what I have explained above: 'I owed it (Schwerentin) a debt of gratitude which only with my life could I repay'. What is the debt and the gratitude? Why are these ethical issues for me? The debt comes from my ontology which perceives responsibility to myself and others as an integral way I can interact with

the world, and in so doing I am imbued with a sense of purpose and meaning for my own life. This gives me joy. This is the gratitude I feel. If you like, put simply, I have been blessed with a vocational sense of purpose and meaning in my life. What else can I do but repay it with my life? I have to do it. Anything else would be an abnegation of both how I perceive my purpose and my responsibility.

And where now is the aesthetics of this particular development? When writing the conclusion to the novel, I was deeply moved by what it seemed to enable me to give voice to. I knew then, although I was not able to express it directly (I had expressed it metaphorically) that it meant something profound for my life in education and my life as a whole. I knew that it represented an aesthetically meaningful articulation of my deepest values. I believe it is the synthesis of the ontology, educational knowledge and the ethics in 'Returning' wherein, I believe, lies its aesthetic value. And it is drawing reality out of the fiction and trying to enact it within my educative relationships, and then trying to represent it fairly to all concerned in the relationships, in which the validity of this section and of the values underpinning this thesis reside. Thus to draw out an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships and to use the insights to enhance the educational quality of the relationships and the processes drawn from them, I am claiming, is to realise a significant educational power for the good. I believe I have demonstrated an educational synthesis between the true, the beautiful and the good in my educational life. (N.B. 1996 - See Epilogues for further explanation of this claim.)

At the beginning of this Part Three (after the Introduction) I quoted this

from Tony Ghaye in reference to ontological authenticity (which I have shown is related to the educational knowledge, the ethics and the aesthetics of my practice):

'How far have the understandings of the participants improved, clarified, matured, expanded, and been elaborated upon during the process of the research? Can the participant(s) attest to the fact that they now understand the issue better, understand a broader range of issues or appreciate that which they have previously failed to understand fully?'

I believe that I have shown a marked development in terms of my understanding of the issues involved. I believe that this, given the nature of the understanding, will mean a development (however formative) within the work of people like Kevin, Justine, Jacqui, Sarah and CC, although I recognise that it is early days for such a claim. I believe it is partly due to the my perceived synthesis (discussed in Part One) between truth and care which I now consciously try to enact within educative relationships. Holland (1975) has this to say about such a synthesis:

'The connected [group] constructs truth not through conflict but through consensus, whose original meaning...was 'feeling or sensing together', implying not agreement, necessarily, but a 'crossing of the barrier between ego and ego', bridging private and shared experience.' (p.291)

When I started writing this section (a couple of weeks before the Validation Meeting at Wootton Bassett on 21.10.93.) I thought I was outlining a straightforward conclusion to a thesis which was about showing the significance of developing a notion of an aesthetic

morphology of my educative relationships as itself an educational process. My spirit, always more prescient than my intellect, would not let it rest there. It is not that I necessarily understand more about the issues, but I can at least point to a more elaborate awareness of what the issues are.

In a typical Action Research manner, this thesis has encouraged me to search for increasingly educational questions (Nixon, 1981). My search for the golden thread, as I originally termed it, has found the value of developing a conscious and working synthesis between my ontology, ethics, and aesthetics into educational knowledge. Here, then, is my new question:

‘How can I utilise my understanding of the significance of a reconciliation (Hegel, 1802) of my ontology with its ethics and their relationship to my educational knowledge within my future educational practice?’

It is out of that reconciliation which I draw the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. It is within a lived realisation of the educational validity of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships that resides the most worth, I would claim, that I can offer my own existence. I am thinking of my work as an educator who seeks to improve her practice in order to improve the quality of learning for all involved in the processes.

I offer this tentative action plan (see concluding chapter, Whitehead, 1993b) as an imagined solution to the above question:

- I wish to edit a collection of my (ex) students’ action research enquiry

reports. The students, Jean McNiff (with Hyde Publications) and I have already talked about this and have decided that one way forward would be to taperecord conversations between myself and the new teachers at our meeting on 27.11.93. as preludes to each report. This would minimise my authorial voice and maximise theirs. (See Davies, Kennard and Hogan, 1993, with insights on the value of collaborative reports);

- I wish to publish my initial teacher-education guide (again with Hyde Publications) but I will need to rewrite parts of it to bring up to date some of the political context in which initial teacher education is now placed, and also my own developing insights where appropriate;

- I wish until next July to continue with the organisation of the 3rd World Congress in Action Research, Action Learning and Process Management which I highlighted recently in this section. I aim to improve the quality of my understanding about such organisational processes as I am now beginning to see the value of ways of thinking which encourage others from varying backgrounds and experiences to come together in an attempt to account for our work as we seek to improve the quality of what we are doing. I wish to promote the values underpinning my understanding of communal ways of working which I have explored in this thesis;

- I need to continue to research a process of facilitating educational action enquiries with students as within such a process I come closer to an understanding of how to live a more ontologically authentic existence. And living an ontologically authentic existence enables me in turn to contribute to my life in education. This may in the near future necessitate a change of life-style in terms of location and occupation.

Epilogue to Part Three

My Ontology: A Question of Emphasis

*'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say -
What manner of man art thou?'*

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.'

July, 1996. In this Epilogue I would like to show the relationship of Part Three to the thesis and to the rest of my claim to be creating my own living educational theory through an account of my educational development. I perceive Part Three to be consciously concerned with a search for the place of my own ontology within my educative relationships and development. My second claim to educational knowledge was largely constructed from this section of the thesis: *'The analysis of my own fiction is an ontological guide to my effectiveness in turning my educational values into action.'*

Together with The General Prologue and these Epilogues, I am most pleased with Part Three. This is because I believe they all reveal the greatest synthesis of my ethical and ontological values in action with learners. Aesthetically, they please me because, as Foshay (1995) terms it:

'[something] is aesthetically sound in the sense that its form, content, style and structure fit one another exceptionally well, and that its substance is worth serious attention.' (p.9)

Kivy (1990) also emphasises the importance of coming to conclusions about what merits serious attention. He expresses it thus:

'I would think that those practical issues which we call profound are just those that go to the heart of the human condition.'

Through the fictional device of 'Returning' and the experimental form of the representation (Eisner, 1993), I came near in Part Three, to the reality of my struggle of finding the place of the ontological in my own educational development. I believe that the morphology and the content of the section fit one another exceptionally well and that their substance is worthy of serious attention. Through the use of my own fiction, I was able to access my own values more clearly than I could have done without such an enterprise. I believe that I got metaphorically to the heart of my own condition. 'Returning' I perceive as a personally profound piece of writing.

What I did not manage then, however, were any insights about the limitations of basing my work in education on a fiction. I was aware when I wrote 'Returning' that, as Lemarque (1990) understood:

'We are invited by a story-teller not just to reflect passively on propositional content but also to recognize and take up attitudes to that content.' (p.110)

I perceived fiction as a direct pathway to the kinds of truths I was seeking: in my own ontology and educational knowledge. What I failed to see was:

'What is true in a fictional world...is always truth relative to a thematic interpretation. A reader...needs to make sense of a work, establishing...the points of view and values implicit

in it before proposing an account of its content or what it is about.' (op cit, p.111)

I am not apologising for writing fiction at all. I enjoy it, and I believe I have some talent for it. However, I now see parallels between my requirement that readers themselves interpreted the connections to be made in my previous submission of this thesis between the dimensions of my educational practice - i.e. the ethical, the ontological, the aesthetic and the knowledge which coheres them all - and the values I unearthed through the writing of fiction. Instead of guiding the reader through accounting for my values, I presented my values and left the reader to make their own assumptions, hoping that I had constructed the text in such a way that the reader would be led to my own conclusions. I believed that:

'To a large extent whether we respond sympathetically or otherwise to some aspect of fiction is controlled by the way the fictive content is presented.' (op. cit. p.110)

In writing educational narratives rather than make-believe fictions, I take the risk of being challenged in my own interpretations. However, I maintain that I needed to explore my own ontology before I could understand where I stood in the name of education. To understand my own educative relationships, I needed to know who I was in those relationships.

In order to understand my present practice, symbolised by The General Prologue, from the point of view of my relationship to fiction as a way of

evolving educational meaning, I would like to reveal the development which has taken place in my use of the fictional in representing my own truths. I believe that fiction and the other arts have a particular power to reveal me to myself as I have already outlined in The General Prologue and the Epilogues to Parts One and Two. This relation of my present emphasis on the use of 'The Ancient Mariner' both within the classroom and in this thesis, to its antecedents - in former experiments with this same poem in the classroom (Laidlaw, 1990), 'Returning' (Laidlaw, 1992b) and an article (Laidlaw, 1994d) for the World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management which I administered in 1994 - is a helpful way of illuminating the quality and breadth of my educational development.

When I first worked with Initial Teacher Education students in the School of Education at the University of Bath, I ran an English Elective for those wishing to teach English as a second subject. I wrote an article about my use of 'The Ancient Mariner' with a group of 11 and 12 year old boys and girls in a mixed attainment class of 29 in 1988. I reconstructed the account from journal entries made at the time. In this particular process of educating the children about the poem they decided to put the Mariner on trial for Birdslaughter. Although I was delighted with the responsibility they were taking for their own learning, I did not then see the opportunity to combine the power of the poem with the ethical values underlying it in the way in which I could enable the children to learn more about both. I wrote this:

At times their organisation broke down in the next couple of weeks and only at those times did they appeal to me for help. They sometimes asked me on points of law which

I wasn't sure about and then they sent people to pester other members of staff or did research in the library, or asked at home etc. They set each other homework and marked it too...If they didn't ask, I didn't interfere. And I felt it would have been interference, not helping, if it had been unsolicited. (p.4)

The metaphorical power of the poem, as I have shown in The General Prologue and begun to explain in these Epilogues, was still disconnected from some of the processes within the classroom. And certainly at the level of representation in that article I cannot back up any claims that the children improved any of the formal aspects of English, or significantly increased their knowledge about the way the poem was constructed. I would also not now consider it to be interference for me to intervene with the children. Quite the reverse. I perceive it now as vital that I know when and how to intervene in ways which increase the girls' understanding of the curricular and ethical issues surrounding the work we're doing. The poem was an inspiration to us in that 1988 classroom, something I think the article (Laidlaw, 1990) can substantiate. However, I believe now that I have developed a better understanding of the relationship in my own practice and theorising about that practice, of the ways in which the closer weaving together of the values in fiction and their realisation can enhance the quality of learning.

In 1992, in 'Returning', I created a world in which people always evolve beyond the I-It relationship (Buber, 1923) which is characterised by the objectification of others to one's own designs. They experience I-You and even I-Thou relationships in which all others are respected and honoured. (See the Epilogue to Part Two for a fuller description of these relationships.) The hero has to mature over 21 years beyond his propensity

to objectify others before he can take up his place as the head of the community at last. The citizens achieve a relationship with the universe that the Mariner only reaches through the pain he has created in his life. In this small principality people take responsibility for their actions through self-knowledge, and the aim of their existence is evolution to higher forms of relating, both as individuals and members of their community. It was my Utopia. When I wrote it I was moved, and still am, to recreate it around me. However, it articulated insights which I did not then know how to enact in the world. It remained at the level of an ideal, whose expression articulated for the first time something of my own ontology.

An interesting feature of this Utopia is that there is no ontological development in anyone but the main character. They have already achieved what Jung (1923) called individuation and have no need of living contradictions to teach them how to evolve further. In other words they have transcended the 'inner fiends' which plague the Mariner and force him to kill the albatross, and spend their lives in an appropriate adoption of their personal responsibilities, in harmony with themselves, each other and creation as a whole. In my terms they have settled their aesthetic imbalances. The hero aspires to this state of being through years of hardship and loneliness. His initial intuition of the awesome nature of the principality, which he takes away with him as an ideal, is years in the maturation towards a conscious acceptance of his responsibility in maintaining it in the real world. In the end he sacrifices everything he has in material terms, and returns in order to put into practice what his ontology has been aware of all his life, but for which he has lacked the courage to take the responsibility before.

As Hanfling (1992) says:

'Problems about the ontology of a work of Art are not problems only for philosophers. They are connected with practical questions about how the works concerned should be performed'. (p.87)

Although Hanfling is referring to the performance of music, I can interpret his comments in the context of my own educational enquiry. It has taken me years to understand, just like the hero in the story, what it means for me to try to create in the real world what I created in 'Returning'. Whereas I believe that the analysis of 'Returning' in Part Three enabled me to come close to understanding my own ontology, it failed to show me how to improve my educational processes as a result. The wording of my second claim to knowledge in this thesis is revealing in this limitation. This fiction acted as *a guide to my effectiveness in turning my educational values into action*, but not as a tutor to my values in order to improve them. I was thus denying a rich potential for development which lies at the heart of this thesis: that values are developmental rather than static, and thus the means through which they can be evaluated should also be developmental. I am not denying the importance of understanding my own ontology, but as a dimension of my educational processes such an approach lacked generativity (McNiff, 1993) which I agree is a vital aspect of the living nature of my educational enquiries (Whitehead and Laidlaw, 1995; Laidlaw, 1996).

When the Hermit asks the Mariner who he is, the 'hero' can only answer through recounting his tale. He has learnt how fully implicated he is in

the tales he tells. Indeed, for him, the narration represents his absolute acceptance of his responsibility for his actions. In 1992, 'Returning' was my story and I am still proud of having written it. However, I have moved on since then as I have shown in The General Prologue. My story has now ceased to be one in which I draw analogies without trying to show how they work in the real world. In 'Returning' the metaphors are there to be read: that human existence 'should' be about loving and responsible relationships in which individuals come to know their place in the scheme of things as they lead lives full of worthwhile activity; people are responsible for their actions and 'must' help others to perceive and then live this truth; Life is inherently meaningful and the universe 'requires' positive moral interactions with it in order for evolution to be sustained; we live in a dialectical relationship to Being and we realise this as we try to lead good and happy lives.

In integrating the above metaphors into the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships with my pupils through 'The Ancient Mariner' epic, I believe I have gone much further in my educational aims than when I explicated my ontological values in my fiction as was my original intention. This development has not happened suddenly. Although I do not wish to attribute a causal link between intention and outcome, I can perceive a pattern in my adoption of fictional devices. When I administered the World Congress I wrote an article entitled: 'Accountability as Responsibility and Point of View' (Laidlaw, 1994d). In it I wrote the following:

'[This paper] traces the pathway from job to vocation. One of the ways it does this is to include extracts from a film, whose theme

centres on a growing acceptance of the hero's ontological responsibility for others. I will not be commenting directly on these extracts but using them to show metaphorically my reasons for taking this Congress so seriously: I believe that striving actively towards what I, in collaboration with others, perceive as the good, can help to move this world to a better place. Part of what it means to do good is revealed through my coming to understand what it signifies to take responsibility for my actions in the world and to become accountable for that process.' (p.120)

As usual I am concerned with responsibility (see the Epilogue to Part Two for further elaboration of the meaning of this emphasis). I outlined what I meant by responsibility then by using the fictional character of Katya in the film I am alluding to as a metaphor for the purpose of my educational endeavours:

'I want a world in which individuals and groups can come together to celebrate the variety and richness of our existence...I want a world in which Katya is surrounded by loving adults who enable her to realise her own unique potential within a social framework committed to democratic processes...' (p.124)

This is still, however, in the realm of fiction. Katya is a fictional character in a drama which stirs me in similar ways to 'The Ancient Mariner'. However, I believe that not only has the representation of my educational values improved since I wrote that article (become more trustworthy in other words (Kincheloe, 1991: 135 - see the Epilogues to Parts Two and Four)) but that such an improvement has required me to improve my

practice with learners in order for that to be so. This has been partly through the processes I related in the first two Parts of this thesis - with their Epilogues - but also my deeper understanding of what it means to know myself in the name of education. I have had to balance the ethics and ontology of my educational practice in order to describe and explain my educational knowledge sufficiently (see Epilogue One). The ethics of my practice have generally needed enhancing as the Epilogue to Part Two substantiates. In my previous submission of the thesis, I had not balanced my ethics and ontology carefully enough in the name of education, to validate my claims to educational knowledge. In Part Three I sought the place of my own ontology without recognising the importance of connecting whilst finding out. I thought I could do it in isolation. Take a dimension of my practice and illuminate it.

In the representation within this thesis in terms of the Epilogues and Prologues I am still faced with that problem. Through this structure I am making a partially arbitrary distinction between the aesthetics, ethics, ontology and knowledge in my practice. However, that is explicitly with the desire to render my practice and knowledge comprehensible within my art as a dialectician (which I will explain in detail in the Epilogue to Part Four). Although they do not exist separately, pulling them apart can show more clearly how they fit together. I believe that one of the main functions of these Epilogues is to show how the dimensions of my educational practice and knowledge fit together. And it is most specifically within my own relationship to fiction that I discover a useful way of describing my own values. It is a useful starting point. My mistake was in thinking it was an end point for ways of explaining my educative relationships, educational development and in creating my living

educational theory.

Our introduction to the Mariner is an interesting one. Coleridge does give us a brief description of him in the opening stanzas, describing him as having a long grey beard, glittering eyes and skinny hands. The Wedding Guest characterises him as *'a grey-beard loon'*. Once we get into the story, however, the Mariner tells us nothing about himself as he was before he kills the albatross. He doesn't even mention himself until the simple statement:

*'With my cross-bow
I shot the albatross.'*

There is no emotion, no description, no suggestion of motive. There seems to be no inner landscape. It is as if he does not exist at all as an individual until he disturbs the balance of the universe. Although the other mariners make a pet of the bird over the weeks that it follows their ship, we have no way of knowing that the Mariner is even there. He does not tell us of any interactions with the other sailors. We are not told that he feeds the bird as they do. In other words he is already adrift from the rest of humanity and creation before he kills the bird. After he has killed the albatross, then he becomes a part of the narrative:

*'And I had done a hellish thing
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.'*

He has now chosen to act in this morally-decisive universe - in other

words a universe which is not neutral but one in which individuals join forces with good or evil. And it is a conscious choice that the individual has the power to make. The Mariner's choice was for evil. The result of his evil choice is in stark contrast to a good experience which Fisher (1988) writes about:

'Before the epiphany I stood apart from the world and the world was not worth being with. The experience of [the epiphany] was redemptive of the world which surrounded [me] in apparent worthlessness...it was the coming together of world and soul.'

(p. 68)

Had the Mariner chosen good rather than evil, which is his responsibility, then his world would have been infused with good purpose and meaning and eventually awe. I believe it is largely through actions that we reflect back to ourselves and others who we are.

Before I had my epiphany in Zarrentin in (East) Germany I had not experienced my own relationship to the world. I experienced a sensation of being both separate from, and fully implicated in, the universe. The silence that day as I sat on a bench overlooking trees, a clear sky and a dilapidated cathedral, I perceived as the heartbeat of the universe. I experienced this silence as awe and after a while could not distinguish my own boundaries from anything around me. Not only was everything around me beautiful and awesome, but I was too because I was a part of it as everyone else is. I was overcome in a similar way I have often been with works of art, especially the sacred music of Bach. What was different about this experience was that it happened in the world and not in the

contemplation of it. In addition it put me in touch with my immortality.

Let me explain this. When I have an aesthetic experience, as I explained in the Epilogue to Part One, I am moved beyond myself through reaching inside, discovering my capacity for love, and then reaching out again into the world with the desire to act on my feelings. When I sat on the bench in Zarrentin, the world seemed to come into me, not the other way round. It was a different kind of aesthetic experience than I have had before or since. It was characterised by the above perceptions of a widening capacity for love and the desire to move outward in order to effect this feeling with others in the world, but it also contained intimations of immortality: I felt as if I were connected to Being and thus transcended my own physical temporality. My sense of immortality broadened my usual aesthetic experience. It had the gift of pointing out to me more forcefully than with other aesthetic experiences, my space in the universe - not just physically, metaphysically, emotionally, and psychologically but in terms of chronology as well. In T.S. Eliot's (1942) words I experienced '*the intersection of the timeless moment with time.*'

I believe that writing 'Returning', which was a direct response to the experience, was a choice I made for the good. It enabled me to articulate something of what I wanted to become and the kind of world I wanted to inhabit. It also enabled me to hang onto the experience both through the writing of the text and the subsequent readings of it. It has taken four years for that linguistic representation to be turned into actions. I believe that the work in the Year Seven classroom, as represented in The General Prologue, comes closest to the values I outlined in the novel. One of the reasons I think I was able to do the work with the Year Seven group and

then represent it in an ontologically authentic way (see below) was because of my grasp of the connections to be made between representation and meaning. And by 'ontological authenticity' here, I find Tillich (1952) helpful when he writes:

'It is the function of an ontological concept to use some realm of experience to point towards the characteristics of being-itself which lie above the split between subjectivity and objectivity.' (p.34)

In other words what is ontologically authentic is what lies above the split between the subjective and the objective. When I wrote 'Returning' I was attempting to articulate my values in ways which were aesthetically pleasing. I am still aesthetically pleased by it. However, when I used it to highlight my educational values I had stepped between the ontological and the epistemological without noticing. I claimed its values as educational without accounting for my actions in the world. If my ontological authenticity were to have educational relevance, then I would need to straddle the dialectic between the objective and subjective realms more carefully through my intentional actions in the world over time. I would need, in the language already used above, to reveal intimations of immortality in my actions and not just my words. To harness my ontological authenticity in the name of education. Yamamoto (1990) says about this in terms of mentoring:

'authentic mentors thus hope and will for their charges. In so doing the mentors themselves may catch a glimpse of their own immortality.' (p.186)

This ties in with my understanding about educational intentions. I perceive being an educator as, amongst other things, an investment in the future. Educating is, for me, an explicit avowal of my faith in the future as a worthwhile place to be. It is also a way of ensuring its worthwhileness. Sometimes, especially in the classroom with children, I perceive my life as part of a rich continuum of human existence, stretching back and forward beyond my conceptual understanding, yet real in the sense that an aesthetic experience is real to me or that 'The Ancient Mariner' is real. To have such an experience in the classroom shows me the links between my own ontology and the purpose of understanding it in the name of education.

My growing understanding about judging the quality of what I am doing in the name of education over time will be dealt with in more detail in the Epilogue to Part Four when I discuss the significance of the immanent dialectic at the heart of all my educational meanings.

Prologue to Part Four

I pass, like night from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach...

July, 1996. At the end of the poem the Ancient Mariner finds himself back in his own country. All those aspects of his life which he left behind, his religious and geographical knowledge, are perceived now as precious, and he delights in his return. And now he has a tale to tell. It is the result of his own experiences which have taught him about the value of connecting with others in ways which point to the inherent order and meaningfulness of Being. It is an ethical and ontological knowledge which he now seeks to pass onto others, a knowledge derived from his experiences of the negation of what is good and true and beautiful. And his tale is told aesthetically (*'I have strange power of speech'*) in ways which reach out to the Wedding Guest to convince him of the validity of his account. His journey has been arduous and long and will never be over. Each time he tells his tale its meaning is forged again through the relationship he develops with the person he is talking to. In that sense it is living knowledge, taken on by the other as having meaning and purpose for his own development. I have taken it as a symbol of the dialectical relationship I perceive in my own educational practice between Truth and concern for individuals. (See The Introduction, section 5.3.2.) After all the Wedding Guest:

*'a sadder and wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.'*

Developing my own living educational theory, which is what I am doing in this thesis, is an ongoing process of making meaning for myself and others out of my own educational development. It is an account dedicated to a process of confronting error in a bid to improve the quality of learning for myself and others. It attempts to show the educational value in the knowledge derived from the connections between my own ethical and ontological concerns articulated here in an aesthetic form as my own living educational theory.

In the account you are about to read I offer you the text of a paper I wrote for the AERA Conference in April 1996, whose title is: 'Democratising my educative relationships: creating my own living educational theory.' The first part of the paper is structured through the action research cycle of having a concern, imagining a solution, acting, observing and evaluating as I show what it means to improve the quality of learning with my pupils in the classroom. The second part of the paper, entitled, 'Creating my own living educational theory', contains extracts and commentary on the Ancient Mariner paper which provides one of the linking motifs in this thesis. This section, as in The General Prologue, is not presented in an action enquiry form and represents my own emancipation from it. Although I owe much to the action enquiry form in my own educational development, I needed to transcend it in order to access the deepest connections between my own ontology and ethics and thus to represent my knowledge most aesthetically. In rejecting the action enquiry cycle form as the way in which I can most appositely coin my knowledge, I am taking responsibility for my own educational development and most appropriately communicating my own living educational theory.

I am conscious that this thesis is finishing as it began - in the classroom. I believe that this brings the thesis full-circle in a way which is aesthetically significant and educationally sound. In this final Part I show what it means to my educational development to understand the dialectic between the forms of my teacher-research and its content. In the Epilogue to Part Four I explain the significance of understanding the immanent dialectic at the heart of my practice and its connection to the development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships.

In the Epilogue, I explain in detail what I have learnt about my educational development from the point of view of my emergent 'I' (Evans, 1995) and its dialectical relationship to the form of action research I am using. I concentrate in particular on my understanding of the immanent dialectic and its relationship to my educational development within the thesis as a whole. I also evaluate Part Four and the thesis in terms of being an answer to the question: 'How can I create my own living educational theory as I offer you an account of my own educational development?'

Part Four (written in 1996)

My own educational knowledge:

Creating my own living educational theory.

**‘Democratising my educative relationships: creating my own
living educational theory’,
paper for A.E.R.A. in New York, 1996.**

Abstract:

I am a teacher-researcher in a girls comprehensive school of 700 pupils. This paper shows what it means to try to democratise the learning process in a bid to improve the quality of learning about English. Through the use of an action research methodology, involvement with learning partners and interactive journals, and making explicit the educational standards of judgement about the work we are doing, I show the links I make in my practice and theory between democratic values and an improvement in learning.

I worked with a group of Year Nine girls for six weeks at the end of the academic year, 1995, as they devised their own English-related topics, set their own criteria and then presented their work to the whole class. My own action enquiry takes the form: ‘How can I democratise the learning process with my pupils in ways which might contribute to an improvement in the quality of our learning?’ (This is within the wider enquiry, which I do not explicitly touch on in this paper: ‘How can I explain my own educational development as I make a contribution to educational knowledge and theory?’)

The educational significance of this study rests on the links made between the methodology of an action research enquiry, the values which I have been able to articulate through it and the contexts in which the practice and theory are located. This

paper is an account of my own living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989) as I attempt to democratise my educative relationships with my pupils.

Foreword:

Sarah: *'It was scary at first. I thought: I can't do this. Why can't she just tell us what to do. I don't really work very well without deadlines. You didn't always tell us straight when everything had to be done, either. I think you should have done really. Don't get me wrong, I loved it. I really loved working in that way, but it was hard. We're used to being told, do this, do that! And you came along and told us we could do anything we liked. It was really scary for me.'*

Laura: *'You can say that again. But I learnt to be free. I learnt to express what I have inside me and to let my emotions out. I learnt that love is the most important thing in a relationship and that if the love is right then the work will come good. I learnt that it's all right to be me. I learnt to spell better!*

(laughter)

Laura: *'O.K., not much better, but better. I also learnt a bit about organisation, but not enough really. I think though that this year I am much more confident about being me. I think it's great.'*

Sarah: *'Yes, you are more confident. I can vouch for that. Last week on Jeans Day you came in with a notice pinned to your front saying: 'My jeans are invisible. They look like a skirt!' You wouldn't have done that before when you weren't so confident.'*

Laura: *'I learnt that I have something to say as well, and that I know whether something feels good that I've done or not. Last week when my English teacher told me that I hadn't expressed myself very carefully, I realised he was right but I still knew it was a good piece of work. It was true to me. I learnt that from you.'*

Maira: *'When you look back at what you achieved, what stands out?'*

Sarah: *'That piece of writing I did about 'Hard Times'. Pride, that's what I feel. It was a good piece of writing. I enjoyed it and it stretched me. But it wasn't just the writing itself, I proved something to myself. That I could do it. That I could write something that made me feel better about myself.'*

Laura: *'That's exactly what I feel too. I wrote things that were true for me and I saw*

that other people could like them as well. That really means something to me.'

I see myself first and foremost as a teacher-researcher who aims to account for her own practice in this paper. I want to democratise the learning process between us as I try to account for my educational values in my actions and theory. You may be a teacher-researcher like myself, or perhaps you are a university academic. You may be a classroom teacher, an educational administrator or a Headteacher. Whoever you are, I think we may have something in common as educators: I believe we both have a desire to improve something. In this paper I want to account for my claim that I have improved the quality of learning with my pupils through a democratisation of my educative relationships. I want to invite you to read my paper in a spirit of true enquiry which values understandings arrived at through a genuine exploration.

I am a teacher-researcher who loves teaching. Most of all I love to see what happens when children begin to take responsibility for their own learning and start to see that they are capable of speaking on their own behalf about things which concern them. I see the democratising of the learning processes I engage in with the girls in the classroom to be connected with helping them to take responsibility for their own learning within an environment in which they recognise their responsibilities to others as well as to themselves as they learn something of value. I also believe, with Dewey (1916), that fulfilling 'democratic' aims in our classroom means that the learning processes:

'must be capable of translation into a method of co-operating with the activities of those undergoing instruction. It must suggest the kind of environment needed to liberate and to organise their capacities.' (p.108)

Dewey goes on to say that such learning processes must:

'engage in something which makes the lives of others better worth living and which accordingly makes the ties which bind people together more perceptible.' (p.316)

In my own practice, as you are about to see, I infer a relationship between the democratisation of the learning process and an improvement in its quality. I find that trying to improve the processes of learning by making them more explicit within the classroom, also highlights the quality of relationship between myself and the pupils, and between the pupils themselves.

In addition I think that democratising the learning process has an influence on the kind of knowledge which can result from that process. Dewey writes:

'Through negotiating our meanings we come closer to realising what is of generalisable value in human existence and how, by extension, we might realise that practically.' (p.240)

In the final section of this paper I will be addressing the issue of the kind of knowledge and theory that my research promotes.

I am struck by Lomax's (1994) description of 'democracy' when she writes:

'to value others' interpretations and recognise their right to participate in the definition of a shared reality.' (p.21)

In the paper you are about to read, I show what it means to try to democratise the learning process with a group of 14 year old girls in our English lessons, and then through researching the process, to articulate my own 'living educational theory' (Whitehead, 1989) as represented through this paper for AERA. I am writing this paper bearing in mind that the categories which structure this conference have no category for educational theory. I believe that my educational research serves two functions: first to give me a vehicle through which I can improve the quality of my educational practice,

and secondly, to contribute to educational knowledge and theory through the descriptions and explanations I can offer to such a forum as this. This presentation is also part of my attempt to democratise the educative relationships between school and university teachers and researchers. I am not content simply to allow others (for example Calderhead, 1987; Kincheloe, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Day, 1993) to hegemonise what constitutes educational knowledge and theory about what it means to be in teacher in the classroom. I can speak for myself. Instead of university academics writing about 'teachers' knowledge', or, like Howe (1995), writing on some theoretical developments to do with democracy, justice and action research, I want to show that a classroom teacher is capable of articulating her own knowledge and theory as she tries to improve her practice.

Structure and content of this paper:

The following paper is rather long. This is because it describes and explains a process of democratisation through correspondence and dialogue in the form of action enquiry cycles (Whitehead, 1985) which examine the meaning of my own living educational theory. In the first part of the paper I will contextualise an enquiry (called '**Contexts**') which I undertook in June and July, 1995 with a group of Year Nine girls (14 years old) as they chose their own English-related topics, wrote action plans, worked closely with learning partners, and developed their own educational standards of judgement by which their projects could be evaluated. Finally they presented their work to the whole group in a celebration of achievement. This process will be described and explained in the second part of the paper (called **Into the Classroom**).

In the final part of this paper, I will be explaining the educational significance of this enquiry as I articulate more specifically my own living educational theory through the enquiry I am now undertaking at school in a bid to further democratise the learning process with the girls I am teaching this year. This section is entitled: '**Creating my own living educational theory**'.

Contexts:

I work as an English teacher for half the week at a local girls' comprehensive school in

Bath. I have been there for 18 months. The word 'comprehensive' refers to the enrolment policy: girls are not admitted through academic performance, but, in our particular case, through catchment area, whether sisters are already in the school and then through individual applications from parents not fulfilling either of the first two requirements.

For the other half of the week I am active at the local university. There I help to run The Bath Action Research Network. There are a number of teacher-researchers from Infant, Junior, and Secondary schools connected to this centre. We also are involved here with some in-service training. We place a lot of value on the importance of dialogue as the cornerstone of good practice (McNiff, Whitehead and Laidlaw, 1992). Work already derived from that premise is available on the World Wide Web on <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw>

In 1990 I began an educational action research Ph.D. with Jack Whitehead at the University of Bath. In my Ph.D. I am researching what it means for my own educational development to be improving the quality of educative relationships with pupils and students in the learning process as I make a contribution to educational knowledge and theory.

I began teaching on the Initial Teacher Education programmes in the School of Education and my Ph.D. enquiry has been partially an account of those years. It was during that time that I began to understand what it meant to the educational significance of my practice to take Foucault's (1980: 41) words about '*the indignity of speaking for others*', seriously. I began to realise that enabling the voices of my students to emerge through the texts which I was producing changed the balance of power within the educative relationship and the knowledge that was emerging about 'good' practice. I wrote an article (Laidlaw, 1994a) about the democratisation of the learning process with a Postgraduate Education student which was published in *Educational Action Research: an International Journal*. Its main focus was on the democratising potential of dialogue within an educative relationship with one of my Initial Teacher Education students. I feel that some of the important educational groundwork for my future

practice in the classroom and my own living educational theory was articulated then.

Influential in my research has been the growing integration of Whitehead's (1989b) notion of a living educational theory. I understand that I, as an individual, am in the process of creating my own educational theory as a classroom teacher, when I research and becoming publicly accountable for the process at the points of implementation, modification and evaluation. Unlike a disciplines approach to educational theory in which knowledge is constituted by the philosophy, sociology, history and psychology of education (Hirst, 1983) I believe that educational theory is being created by individuals like myself trying to improve their own practice (Whitehead, 1993; Eames, 1995; Evans, 1995; Hughes, 1996).

The 'living' quality of the educational theory I am involved with consists of the developmental aspects of my research and the ways in which they connect: my research is never finished. It is concerned with living relationships which develop over time and whose meanings and significances evolve, as I evolve a way of writing about them and try to improve them on a practical level. My theory is living because it fuses my ongoing educative relationships with my theorising about them. It is praxis. My educational theory also integrates McNiff's (1993) tenet about the importance of remaining a learner as a teacher in the classroom. McNiff also writes about the way in which teachers and learners involved in action research enquiries tend to mirror each other's processes, and that making this process of mirroring explicit can become a point of reference through which improvements in the learning process can be made. Such is also my experience in the classroom with the girls. The understanding of this mirroring process has been crucial in my own educational development as I have tried to improve the quality of learning in the classroom.

In 1994 I became the chief administrator for the 3rd World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management held at the University of Bath in July of that year. During that time my Ph.D. research was about gaining a better understanding of the political implications of becoming accountable for my own practice in the name of education. After this I returned to the classroom where I was

able to develop the learning that I had begun in Initial Teacher Education and within the administrative role of the Congress to do with trying to democratise my educative relationships.

Into the Classroom:

Last year from January - July 1995, I taught a group of 29 high attaining Year Nine girls. In May, like all other 14 year olds in state schools, they were required to sit their written Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) in Shakespeare and Language-related activities. The National Curriculum, of which the SATs are an integrated aspect, is heavily regulated in England and requires teachers to cover particular areas of curriculum-content, and specifies the age-range when certain topics should be taught. Shakespeare is compulsory in the syllabus for fourteen year olds. After the tests we were then free to explore something outside the prescribed syllabus. Throughout the calendar year I had been encouraging the girls to engage in the action planning process in which they keep interactive journals about issues related to English, engaged with learning partners with whom they could learn to criticise their own and each other's work, and then to evolve their own educational standards of judgement by which they could judge their own work. They then became accountable for any claims about an improvement in the quality of their learning (see later * for the reasons for emphasis). All of these processes I was also following as part of my own ongoing research. I perceive a strong link between engaging in processes designed to account for what we do in the name of education and upholding democratic values in the classroom. This link is assumed throughout this paper.

The action planning process in our classroom took the form of Whitehead's (1985) action enquiry cycle of articulating a concern, imagining a solution, acting, observing, evaluating and modifying in the light of our findings. It is only now in the writing of this paper, however, that I am seeing the above underlined processes corresponded closely with the stages of an action enquiry, although at the time it was very much implicit rather than explicit. In other words the action planning stages could be referred to the stages which my pupils and I followed:

- a) **'Articulating a Concern'** corresponds to the highlighting of the pupils' own concerns in their journals and the beginning of my understanding about what responsibilities as an educator I was incurring, and those of the girls';
- b) **'Imagining a Solution'** corresponds to the stage at which the pupils began to work out ideas with learning partners and I tried to think of ways of helping each individual move forward in her enquiry through dialogue and correspondence;
- c) **'Acting'** then took the form of the pupils and I writing and talking to each other about their work as they tried to produce something which related to English in the topic of their own devising;
- d) **'Observing'** was the stage when the girls articulated the criteria upon which they wanted their topics to be judged and I explored the development of my own educational standards of judgement through which I wanted my work to be judged. Although this was not strictly an evaluative stage, it was characterised by the beginnings of evaluative perspectives and a greater independence in drawing conclusions;
- e) **'Evaluating'** took place when the girls presented their work and then criticised it based upon the criteria which each girl had developed and I presented two articles (Laidlaw, 1995a&b) related to this present paper to my own validation group at the University of Bath.

Also significant here is the degree to which correspondence and dialogue within the educative relationship constitutes the form of our enquiries in the classroom as we tried to improve the quality of learning. In my article (Laidlaw, 1994a) I developed the theme of the democratising potential of dialogical focus in an action enquiry. In this present account I think I have taken my work one stage further as I show what it means not only in my practice to develop such values in action, but as you will see in the final section how I can then develop my own living educational theory from it as I account to you for my actions and conclusions.

In this article I will be concentrating mainly on two students, Claire and Sarah. This is - first because I have the most documentary evidence relating to these girls in a form which is accessible to this article and their responses to the processes we engaged in were markedly different; secondly, I am working to a deadline not only with this paper

but also on various aspect of my schoolwork; thirdly, I have been able to follow up with two of the girls (March, 1996) some of the outcomes to the learning they experienced with me last year which I think reflect appropriately on the degree to which I can make claims about having improved the learning through some democratic procedures to do with choice, outcome and evaluation. In my recent communications with Sarah (and also another pupil from last year, Laura) I am learning something about the educational significance of accounting to learners about what I have learnt from them.

I am also learning something of value now in the attempt to account to you, the reader, for both the process, and the significance of the process, of democratising the learning that I and the girls experienced last Summer. Because of my learning with Sarah, Claire, Laura and others, I am able not only to explain more what it means to democratise the process with learners but also to understand more of the educational significance of trying to explain to you why such learning matters. In claiming the status of academic knowledge for my teacher-research, I am also working on democratising the educative relationships between university and school teachers and researchers.

After the SATs I decided that it was time that the girls had some freedom of choice about what it was they were going to do. I recognised Dewey's sense that:

'Until the democratic criterion of the intrinsic significance of every growing experience is recognised, we shall be intellectually confused by the demand for adaptation to external aims.'

I was concerned that such adherence to external aims as the SATs represented was not necessarily conducive to creativity in the English classroom. Experience has taught me (Laidlaw, 1994c, 1996a), that improvement in terms of curricular and personal learning are related in my classroom to the ways in which we negotiate tasks and meanings throughout the learning process.

In an article (Laidlaw, 1995a) about our classroom as we prepared for the SATs I wrote:

'One of the things I am concerned to promote is the children's own voices. By that I mean that I want them to be able to ask questions about something to which they wish to know the answer. I want them to be able to talk about what concerns them in English, and to be able to come up (in negotiation) with their own solutions about their own concerns. In addition I want them to feel encouraged to discuss their ideas with me and others in the group and to feel that they are taken seriously as individuals. I also want them to be able to challenge my conclusions and teaching methods in a spirit of enquiry.' (p.3)

In the same article I wrote about the reason why I wanted to put the above into practice:

'Loving my girls, and I do love them - means for me to believe in their value as human beings, to want them to lead happy lives, independent yet connected to others in ways which enhance their existences. Loving them is not a sentimental or possessive emotion but one which enables me to try to the best of my ability to help them to lead full and happy lives.' (p.5)

The SATs had not, to my mind, allowed a sufficient degree of negotiation. I could not live out my values fully in the classroom with a curriculum which, I believe, did not enhance the girls' potential as individual centres of consciousness, capable of making complex decisions about their own learning. I wanted to spend the last six weeks with them trying to open creative doors with them and discussing ways of improving their learning which might enable them both to learn more effectively and to enjoy the process as well. I believed that giving them the chance to work on projects related to English, but of their own devising, would give them opportunities to take more responsibility for their own learning and to deepen their understanding of the processes of their own learning. I also required them to have a learning partner who would help with drafting, editing, evaluation and accounting for any claims they were making about improving the learning aims they set themselves in their action plans.

a) Articulating Concerns:

On 14.6.95. I first put to the group the idea of devising and carrying out their own projects. This was the first step in opening up the possibility to them of taking responsibility for their own learning instead of having outcome and process wholly devised by the teacher. In this section I will show some of the girls' responses and my own to this formative stage in terms of what it began to mean to us to formulate what it was that concerned each one of us.

My suggestion that each girl come up with her own ideas was at first greeted by a silence which I interpreted as uneasy. I asked them to talk in friendship groups and then to report back on their impressions.

Laura: *'This is going to be hard, isn't it?'*

Sarah: *'Yes. Are you going to judge our work at all, or do we have to do it all ourselves?'*

Claire: *'I can't wait. I think it sounds great!'*

Other comments included:

Antonia: *'I don't have a clue what's going to happen. It's a bit nerve wracking.'*

Katherine: *'We're not used to doing it like this. We expect you to tell us what to do.'*

Nathalie: *'I'm not being funny, Miss, but why don't you just tell us what to do?'*

Their comments seemed to me to be understandable for pupils who were used to having parameters largely determined by someone else about their own learning. At the time I didn't have well-articulated responses to their concerns. I talked about having faith in their own ability to come up with something of value and something they could be proud of in the future, but I also said:

Moira: *'I've not done something like this before either. I'm a bit daunted too!'*

Laura: *'I'll guarantee not as much as us, Miss. I'll guarantee it!'*

On 4.5.95. I had written to Claire in her journal because she was experiencing problems with her creativity and she wanted to know what to do about it. (I also want to mention that I have not edited the girls' written comments in terms of spelling and punctuation as I feel that such an act would partially obscure the authenticity of the account you are about to read.) I wrote to Claire:

'What is it you want to write, Claire? And how are you trying to write it?'

She replied in writing:

'I feel that I have a lot to say but I don't know how to say it and yet I do. Sometimes I like the way I write, but it's not the way most people write, so I don't know whether I should?'

I wrote back:

'8.5.95. I think you should just do it. If you have something to say, say it!'

Claire was trying to formulate her second action plan, her first being mainly concerned with the more formal aspects of English. I was pleased to see her beginning to grasp something much more challenging and I felt, more fulfilling to her if she succeeded.

On 8.6.95. we had a conversation about our correspondence through the journals:

Claire: *Sometimes when I read what you write to me it makes me cry.*

Moir: *Why is that, do you think?*

Claire: *Because you take me seriously. You encourage me. You don't keep telling me what to do.*

Moir: *Of course, Claire. I want to set you free. If you're in a cage, then my job is to open it and then you can fly.*

Claire: *No one has ever spoken to me like that. Certainly not a teacher, anyway.*

Moira: *I want you to feel free to explore your writing. You don't know where it's going to go, but this is a real opportunity for you. I want you to take it if that's what you want. I think it's really exciting and I know you can do something with the time. The Eliot we're doing is well suited to you exploring certain themes.*

Claire: *I'd like to look at some of his religious ones. I like 'Journey of the Magi'. When we were reading it in class, I really thought I understood what it was about. It's so sad and so unhappy. I want to be able to write about it.*

Moira: *You will, honestly, and you'll be pleased with what you write.*

Claire: *I really love working with you this year. I'm really excited about this.*

I was consciously trying to take Claire and her learning needs seriously so that she might experience what it means to take responsibility for her own learning and to enjoy the exploration of her own talents.

Sarah had already written to me in her journal about what was blocking her progress as she perceived it:

'13.3.95. All my ideas come from things that people have mentioned in class. I just extend them a bit. I know it's really selfish but I really like to be the best in everything (I can't help it) and if I'm not I think I've failed.'

Later she wrote this:

'9.6.95. I know we are supposed to be being more responsible for our own work, but I am finding the T.S. Eliot poem responses quite hard. I find it hard to do all the work if I am not under pressure to do it...Please could you give me a deadline for when this work has to be in.'

I replied to her:

'10.6.95. I would like to feel that by the end of this term you feel more confidence about setting the agenda. How can I help you to take more responsibility for your own

learning? That's a genuine question. What can I do? Neither is it a critical question. Because you're so bright it seems to me that many avenues are open to you...I also think you lack the confidence to pursue your own line of enquiry, and it is that...which I wish you to pursue in those final weeks. I see these final weeks as a real testing ground for you, Sarah, in which you make decisions about how you can more appropriately express yourself and also what constitutes for you 'good' work.'

Democratising the learning process does not mean that every decision is negotiable. There are certain aspects of the learning process which I was not prepared to negotiate around, but until this process had finished, I was not as sure as I am now what those areas relate to. In the final section of this article I will be picking up on that point again.

Sarah's comments showed me that she wanted me to define parameters for what she was doing. Claire's alternatively seemed to suggest that she was finding the thoughts of greater choice exciting.

Other comments about the prospect of choice include Rachael's:

'17.6.95. I really like the idea of doing what we want to, but it is quite hard to choose what we wanted to do at first. I think it will be quite hard to keep working well because when your on your own working we tend to mess around a bit so it will be quite hard. '

Many of the comments that I was receiving in their journals and talking to them about focused on their sense of doubt about their ability to do something so seemingly unstructured. One of the hardest aspects I found was not jumping in with solutions for them. That was part of my learning. When do I intervene? How much do I leave the process to them?

b) Imagining Solutions:

Vital to the democratising of my educative relationships, and thus the learning which can take place within those relationships, seems to me to

be allowing the girls to work out what might answer their own concerns in their own ways. Just as I wanted them to begin to work out what they really cared about in relation to their learning in English, I wanted them to formulate what their solutions might be. In my own educational research (Laidlaw, 1994a,b,c; 1995a&b; 1996a&b) I have found this stage pivotal not only to the learning I can do but to my own sense of responsibility for that learning. I find that it is also related to the degree of worthwhileness I can develop about my own learning as I seek to account for it. In this section I will be showing what it means to some of the girls to be communicating their own ideas about how their work can progress. Because of the nature of this stage, our ideas are tentative and exploratory, but full of optimism about what might be possible.

George wrote:

'17.6.95. Do you think I could do responses to T.S. Eliot in a newspaper. With poems, articles, pictures, interviews, diaries and things like that. Also as things are coming into my mind, stories, posters, some research. What do you think?'

I replied:

19.6.95. Sounds great to me. Go for it! I'll really look forward to what results.'

I wanted to show the girls that I valued their own insights and enthusiasms and that I trusted them to come up with something of value not simply stipulated by a teacher. I also was not going automatically to suggest ideas if a girl couldn't come up with something straightaway. I found that difficult. Laura wrote after she had finished her project:

'17.7.95. I think I could have done a little but more but it took me a few weeks to decide what I was going to do.'

Sarah wrote in her journal on 18.6.95.:

'I would really love to write a story with illustrations...I want it to be a proper-length story...Is it all right if I just write the opening chapter? The first chapter of a book is one I always remember...Last term I loved doing the textual analysis of Shakespeare and I'd love to do something like this on other people's work. I hope it'll also help me with my own story. Thanks you loads 'n' loads for letting us do this...'

I replied:

'19.6.95. I love the way you're working at the moment. If you look back through your work you'll see how much you've done in terms of taking responsibility for your own learning. I think it's great how much you're taking the initiative in your own processes. I am sure that this project has the potential to liberate you. Always looking to teacher/authority figures to set the parameters can be limiting in terms of your own creativity. Be free Sarah. Really enjoy it! Really make the most of this time. I believe in you so much and am so impressed with what you have achieved already.'

Claire set herself the following task in her journal:

'7.6.95. New Target The SATs are over and I have decided on a new target. Yes, I have decided what I am going to do but have absolutely no clue about how I am going to do it. I have decided to try and spend the rest of this term trying to write more freely and enjoy it. I want to express myself more freely and enjoy it. I want to express myself well, I want to be able to get my feelings across between without getting long-winded...Right now my action plan is a bit bare as I have no clue about how to go about it. I was hoping for a few ideas. I think maybe reading other poems like T.S. Eliot helps, but other than that, I have no ideas.'

I wrote to her:

'You've set yourself something tremendously challenging. I'm really glad you've

asked such specific questions...Try out a variety of styles and subjects and see what suits you...For my part I will try to offer you space in lessons and for homework if that is what you want...Look how far you've come in understanding your own learning, Claire...I think this could be one of the most exciting journeys of your life and I will give you all the support you need.'

I felt this stage was a learning experience for me too as the girls tried to articulate what it was they wanted to spend their time on, and I began to feel what my own responsibilities for the outcomes might be. I wrote in my own private journal:

'9.6.95. 'I feel I've turned a corner of understanding in my work with Claire today. What a marvellous girl she is! I have been worried that I have not offered sufficiently creative guidelines for the girls and that when Nathalie sits wondering whether she can do the project ahead, and Laura K. is still not settling down to her work, I am not behaving as a responsible educator. And yet I am. This is responsible education. Letting them come to their own understandings in their own time. I've read the books, heard the rhetoric, written it myself, but this time, I feel it has the potential to become truly emancipatory for us all. I've got a feeling that by probing Claire about the standards of judgement she can evolve for herself, I am setting her free from not just formal constraints in school, but the restraints she feels inside, which I perceive as destructive of her self-esteem and sense of well-being, as well as destructive of her creativity and authentic responses to English.'

c) Acting:

This stage seems to me to be vital to the practical exploration of responsibility and testing out one's worldview. It was important for me to remember to encourage these first tentative steps by the girls as they began to recognise what it meant to open their own learning horizons. In this section the girls begin to put their ideas onto paper and I respond in ways which are designed to move their enquiries forward. In other words I am responding to their learning needs rather than requiring them to respond solely to my teacher-instructions.

Claire produced the following writing on her chosen poem of exploration, 'The Burial of the Dead' by T.S. Eliot:

'The Burial of the Dead'. I have my own ideas and my own interpretation. I do not follow the same rules of literature. My understanding is in a new light and different in many ways. I could not tell you the meaning of every word as it does not mean the same to me. Marie on the sled is like a vivid memory as my mind paints pictures but actually represents a desire, 'And I was frightened...!And down we went in the mountains, there you feel free' (Claire's emphasis). The true meaning is so different. No one else could understand the depth of breaking out of the continuous circle each day with the same aim of achieving and doing well. Exam results are a fact of life to some people to me each one is either a relief or a punishment. However every time I know it will return again will it be next month, next term or next week. My life is dominated with aims to achieve. Each day is a stepping stone in my mission to take a role in teaching more children what I have learned. Sometimes I feel my life does not add up as I was to break out of a circle which is meant to slowly take me to my summit. I sometimes feel I am betraying myself but I have an aim to fulfill what I am destined to do. 'With a wicked pack of cards/ Here she said is your card'.

My life appears to be a book, a book in another language I cannot understand the text but it is as if each day I learn a new word and elucidate a new phrase. This eternal cycle leads to my already disclosed salvation,'

I wrote in response:

15.6.95. I love this writing, Claire. I love the way you're expressing yourself now and feel that you're breaking new ground in ways that really will matter to you and to others. I am most taken by your growing capacity to look at where you stand in the scheme of things. It's wonderful to see you fly, Claire...You have started to become the arbiter of your own destiny. You have started to say: 'this is how I work, this is what I mean, and this is how I'm going to do it!' I cannot directly express why this seems so amazing to me, but I wonder whether if I tell you a story it will give you an

idea about how much your new-found voice means to me...'

I then told her a personal anecdote and finished with:

'I know that what is happening in our classroom will never leave us. I know that wherever I am and whatever I am doing, what you and others in the class have taught me will always be a part of me. I am proud to be a part of it, to be able to witness it, and to know what it means. Thank you.'

With Sarah I found it difficult to know quite how to help her. She did not seem to be responding to the freedom in the same way as Claire. It was difficult for me to encourage her as I had Claire, because Sarah was not so happy with putting her ideas down on paper. On 14.6.95. I wrote to her:

'How's it going, Sarah? I haven't seen your work for a while? Do you want any help with it?'

She replied:

'15.6.95. I'm having trouble getting started. I still want you to tell me what to do. I've got lots of ideas and I could write something now, but I want it to be really good. The best. I'm thinking alot, if that means anything!'

I wrote back:

15.6.95. Come and talk about your work. I really am looking forward to seeing what you do, Sarah. I know that there's something wonderful inside you waiting to come out. Let's see how we can get it out into the open where it belongs. Let's all share it, shall we?'

d) Observing:

This stage of an action enquiry seems to me to be characterised for the

girls by the articulation of the standards of judgement which partly evaluate and direct the educational value of an enquiry. In my experience it is a stage characterised by doubt, particularly with pupils who are not used to exercising this degree of responsibility for their own learning. In the first two articles I wrote about this group of girls (Laidlaw, 1995a&b) I concluded that it was the most significant stage in terms of the girls coming to see what it meant to take responsibility for their own learning. As a teacher-researcher, for me this stage is characterised by stepping back to a degree until the girls' standards of judgement and the beginnings of their own written work emerge. This stage is marked by the beginnings for me of evaluating the quality of the work we are doing in the English lessons.

The educational significance of this stage of our action enquiries is revealed in the way in which the content of the subject (in the girls' case English, and in mine pedagogy) begins to develop a symbiotic relationship with the beginnings of evaluative perspectives. In other words the ways in which we are individually thinking about how to evaluate our subject is in an intimate and nurturing relationship with the development of our understanding of that subject. This is clearly demonstrated in Claire's work, less so in Sarah's because of her reluctance to put pen to paper. I believe my own synthesis between my developing understanding of my own pedagogy and its quality, is revealed in my remarks about enabling others to speak in their own voices about issues which concern them.

Shortly after our discussion, which unfortunately I did not record, Sarah set up her own educational standards of judgement by which she wanted us to judge her work:

- 1) Originality: - If my original idea was individual and creative. Also if it is something new, that I have never done before and would like to try.*
- 2) Presentation: - If it is neatly presented, and you can see that a lot of care and time*

has been taken over it.

3) Spellings/punctuation: - If there are very few (one or two on each A4 sheet) or no spelling or punctuation mistakes.

4) Ipsative evaluation: - If I personally have improved any work I have done before.

5) Enjoyment: - If you can see that I have enjoyed it (an aesthetic feeling).

6) Your enjoyment/understanding.

7) Perception: - Whether I have understood what the author is doing (their 'devices')

8) Practicality: - Whether I have put into practice my ideas/conclusions, or if I haven't actually used them in my chapter, that I have shown that I understand how to 'use' them.

9) Understanding: - Do you understand what I am talking about, or could I be talking about the velocity of space for all you know or care?

It is significant that Sarah did not feel it necessary to discuss these criteria with me. This suggested to me that she was beginning to take responsibility for her own learning and was beginning to communicate to others what she felt was of value in the process. She did discuss her standards of judgement with her learning partner Amy whose evaluation on Sarah's work I will refer to later.

At this time, Claire also produced a list of criteria by which she wanted her work to be judged:

1) Presentation;

2) Understanding of the concept;

3) Originality;

4) relation - to the source;

5) Theme - point (putting it across);

6) Enjoyment;

7) Effort and time;

8) Amount of concentration;

9) Creativity (helps to explain the originality);

10) Appropriate to the occasion;

11) Poetic use of language.

It was, however, at this time, that a breakthrough occurred in terms of Claire's own original response to the task of articulating the standards of judgement, although I was happy with criterion 9. I believe that this suggested a connectedness which I felt was educational, and that Claire had given this criterion careful thought.

Claire spent much of her lesson time in the art room constructing a model of T.S. Eliot's world, revealing through it her own sense of what it meant to her to be free and an individual. As a result of a conversation about the standards of judgement we had whilst I was visiting her in the Art Room on 6.7.95. I went back to the classroom and wrote the following which I gave to her at the end of the lesson:

'Dear Claire, There's something enormously exciting about your work at the moment - not just the clay work itself, but in particular about the standards of judgement that you're devising. And that's what's so unusual! When was the last time you heard a pupil saying not only what her work was to be, but how it was to be judged too? And your standard of judgement is also new - a 'heartfelt' criterion! I don't want to put an added burden on you, but I do want to ask whether you would reflect - as it happens - on what it feels like to have this freedom. I know you have alluded to it - but to focus on the processes you are going through. What is 'heartfelt' about it? Why does it matter to you? How/What are you learning? Does it matter to you to set your own criteria? Why? Why not?...I would argue that your activities are educational because you are learning things of value about areas you have chosen, in a context which can learn from you. I want you to teach us what it means to you to take such enormous responsibility for your own learning. Can we talk about this? I'm so excited about your insights. Very well done. Best wishes, Miss Laidlaw.'

Claire responded the next day with this:

'The cage door has been unlocked although I must push it open. I do not rush as I do not know what lies beyond. A whole world waiting to be explored but few will be

given the chance. Others will waste their chance plucking at the bars repeating something they have done for many years, a few may not even bother to look up they have no desire to explore the unknown. However, I have found the door each day opening it a little more as the chains from around my feet slowly crumble to dust leaving me with a new opportunity to fly free! I do not know what lies ahead as I express my feelings in a new way. How I wish everyone could be given the same chance as I, however if they had never been captured they would not be grateful for their freedom. I worked hard for my freedom setting myself targets and judging my achievements and faults. Nobody else could have done that for me, no rule could have accommodated for me as well as for everyone else. We are all different and should be treated accordingly. It would be no good telling everyone in the cage to look up at the unlocked door if some have no desire for freedom. Each person is their own person an individual and different to the next it would be wrong to treat them the same.'

I was overwhelmed by this piece of writing because it represents an authentic voice of someone arguing on her own behalf, with acknowledgement to the differences between human beings, and also compassion for those who cannot understand what she now understands as being so valuable. I am reminded here of the educational standards of judgement I set myself in the previous article which I wanted to fulfil in this action enquiry cycle and which I alluded to earlier in this article:

One of the chief things which I am concerned to promote is the pupils' own voices... I want them to be able to talk about what concerns them in English, and to be able to come up (in negotiation) with their own solutions to their own concerns. In addition I want them to feel encouraged to discuss their ideas with me and others in the group and to feel that they are taken seriously as individuals. I also wish them to be able to challenge my conclusions and teaching methods in a spirit of enquiry. In my own experience, I ask most of the questions and I want the girls to feel that there is an enquiring environment within the classroom, one which encourages them to challenge themselves, each other and me. (p.6).

And on my second action plan I posited this as an educational aim (i.e. a standard of

judgement by which the educational value of my own work could be judged):

How will I know when I have improved the quality of my teaching and learning with this group?

- individuals will feel freer to voice their opinions;

In articulating something so heartfelt:

'as the chains from around my feet slowly crumble to dust leaving me with a new opportunity to fly free!... How I wish everyone could be given the same chance as I... I worked hard for my freedom setting myself targets and judging my achievements and faults. Nobody else could have done that for me, no rule could have accommodated for me as well as for everyone else,'

I feel that Claire has internalised the educational standard of judgement by which she wants her own work to be judged - the 'heartfelt' criterion. Through the way in which she has expressed herself I can infer a sense of strength from within: *'Nobody else could have done that for me, no rule could have accommodated for me as well as for everyone else.'* Clearly at this point, Claire is speaking for herself about something which concerns her and is articulating it in a decisive way.

I also feel she has pointed towards a compassion towards others, a concern for the needs and realities of other people, revealing a dialectical awareness of personal responsibility and social context: *'How I wish everyone could be given the same chance as I.'* and: *'If they had never been captured they would not be grateful for their freedom.'* I do not wish to attribute a causality to the work I do in the classroom, but given the experience of working with Claire and the other girls in the class, I recognise in Claire's contribution a reflection of one of my own most heartfelt educational criteria by which I wish the value of my own work in education to be judged, and indeed part of the value of this article to be perceived: The value of social responsibility, the recognition of the humanity of us all: that we belong together, helping each other, caring for each other, trying to improve the lot of all, that we are not isolated egos in a

vacuum, but that what we do and how we act, has an impact on others. I will write about this in more detail when I come to evaluate the work we have been doing together.

We discussed the heartfelt criterion in class (with Claire's permission) and two other girls seemed to be using it in their own educational standards of judgement.

Lisa wrote in her list:

'Does the performance come across as truly heartfelt and well-performed?'

Becky developed this more fully into a criterion which would enable her to produce what she judged as *'my best work ever!'* (17.6.95.) She wrote:

'When judging my piece I want all these points to be taken into consideration. In particular I think: 'Is it important to me?' is the most important point because this project has to mean a lot to me to make it the best and put all I can into it.'

Later in her evaluation about her story about her relationship with her horse who nearly dies of illness, she wrote:

'I am going to evaluate my project using the standards of judgement I prepared. I have really enjoyed working on this project and it has really meant alot to me because it was something which happened to me. It actually meant life and death and now I can look back and see how hard it really seemed has paid off. I tried to put all my efforts into it because Poppy is so important to me. I could not see a life without her...'

Sarah articulated early the criteria upon which she wanted her work to be judged. In her aim to consider some opening chapters of Literature, she wrote about 'Hard Times' by Dickens, amongst others, which included 'Rebecca' by du Maurier and 'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Brontë. In her 'Introduction' she wrote this:

'Although all authors differ in their styles and quality, they all use the same kind of 'devices' to manipulate their readers into certain opinions about their characters. It is essential that we have the right opinion about a character. For instance, if the book was a tragedy in which the girl's mother died. If we felt no sympathy for the girl or her mother, then we would not feel any hurt or pain when the mother dies. Books are to make us feel emotions in a secondary way, and if we do not feel any emotions, then we will not enjoy the book...'

This is what she wrote about 'Hard Times':

'As Thomas Gradgrind wearily dictates to us the manner in which she should be learning, our minds begin to wander. Should we let this impetuously tedious man really govern our ways of thinking? And as he drones on, about the facts that we should base our lives around, our eyes are set to search the room for anything with any remote interest. But we find nothing. And we are supposed to base our lives around this man's hypothesis, and the facts that this room holds? The absolute dismalness of our surroundings suggest the way in which we are supposed to view this man's theory: with as much interest as this first chapter holds.'

In her conclusion she wrote this about what she has learnt about the book from its opening chapter:

'Dickens makes sure we are bored by Thomas Gradgrind, so we are set against his ideas from the start.'

Her conclusion finishes with her own opening chapter. Clearly she is attempting to create a character consumed by evil, when, for example, she writes:

'She seemed so pure, so true, giving you the confidence to break out of the prisons you had built around yourself. But only so she could lure you into hers. The only pure and true emotion in her was evil...Like the red sky taking the day away, she took your love, your heart - your life...'

e) Evaluating:

This is the educational heart of any action enquiry for me. It seems to me that when a learner is capable of saying what constitutes the good in her own enquiry, she is implying a meaningful connection between learning and the educative relationship that values standards derived from self-knowledge and industry. This leads her to take responsibility for her learning, to say what that learning consists of, and to become publicly accountable for what she has achieved without simply relying on extrinsic criteria. In my experience, being able to evaluate the worth of what I have achieved is both empowering and motivating. It also increases the degree to which I value the learning I have done. I wanted to offer this opportunity to the girls in my care. In this section you will see some of the girls revealing how they responded to their own and others' work, and me responding to some of their presentations and standards of judgement. Again you will see my role expressing itself as a responsive, rather than directive one.

Sarah evaluated her project as follows:

'Originality: - I think the ideas were original and it was something I wanted to try out. I think it was also individual to myself, as it involves doing things I enjoy.

Presentation: - I have taken a lot of time over this project, and I hope it has shown. It looks neat, as it was typed out on the computer, and it is easy to read.

Spelling/Punctuation: - I cannot find any spelling or punctuation mistakes in my work so far. I used a spell-check but even then there were only one or two mistakes.

Ipsative evaluation: - I think I have kept up the standards of any work I have done before, but I don't know if I've improved them. I think I have been more descriptive in my writing since before, and my writing style has been more consistent.

Enjoyment: - I don't know whether it shows if I enjoyed myself or not. I did enjoy the project, but I didn't organise my time very well. This put me under a lot of pressure, so I didn't enjoy it as much as I could.

Perception: - I think I understood well what the author was doing, and I hope it showed in my work.

Practicality: - Although I understood how other authors wrote, I found it hard to write myself. I took a lot of time trying to write a chapter, but I don't think I did it effectively. I don't think I used any of my ideas properly, but I did understand how they are used.

Understanding: - I think that the work I have done is relatively easy to understand, and others know what I am talking about.

The girls then accounted for their criteria to their learning partners and offered their own standards of judgement as ways for their projects to be understood and evaluated. This process is well expressed by Lomax's (1994) comment already alluded to in this paper about:

'valu[ing] others' interpretations and recognis[ing] their right to participate in the definition of shared reality.' (p.21)

Amy, Sarah's learning partner, responded to Sarah project, using her criteria in this way:

Originality - I definately find the idea of your project both creative and individual. I don't think anyone else could have thought of something so original.

Presentation. - Although black and white is very eye-catching, all of the pages seem to look the same. Maybe you could have used different fonts for the different 'reviews'?

I'm sure it will look much better when you put some colourful pictures in. It is also very neat.

Spellings/punctuation - I haven't noticed any spelling or punctuation mistakes in any of your pieces of work. I can tell you have put ALOT of effort into it.

Ipsative Evaluation - Although I haven't seen that much of your old work, it looks like you have improved. Your vocabulary especially. Sometimes we'll just be talking, and you'll come out with some kind of long and complex word, and I'll think, 'What does she mean?!'

Enjoyment - This is a difficult question! I'm not too sure whether you enjoyed this or not. Although you write enthusiastically (not sure if I spelt that right!) I'm still wondering if you enjoyed it or not.

Your enjoyment/understanding - I'm quite sure I understand what you mean when you wrote and I enjoyed reading your work, although it would have been more enjoyable if maybe it was more colourful.

Perception - I've obtained the impression that you understand what the authors are writing about.

Practicality - I cannot answer this one as I have not yet read your chapter.

Understanding - I know what you're talking about in your 'reviews' so I'm sure I will be able to understand your own chapter.

I was thrilled with what Sarah and Amy have achieved. Sarah's understanding of the parameters she has set herself and her attempt to evaluate the quality of her work fairly, show in such phrases as: 'I think I have kept up the standards of any work I have done before, but I don't know if I've improved them. I think I have been more descriptive in my writing since before, and my writing style has been more consistent.

..I don't know whether it shows if I enjoyed myself or not. I did enjoy the project, but I didn't organise my time very well. This put me under a lot of pressure, so I didn't enjoy it as much as I could.'

And Amy's response to Sarah's own tentative evaluation of her enjoyment: *'This is a difficult question! I'm not too sure whether you enjoyed this or not. Although you write enthusiastically (not sure if I spelt that right!) I'm still wondering if you enjoyed it or not,'* convinced me of the authenticity of the process the girls were experiencing. In other words I find that both Amy and Sarah were truly trying to articulate something in order to communicate their understanding. The detail of both the evaluations impressed me, as did the sensitive attention to the other. Sarah did not try to impose in her evaluation the criterion of the enjoyment on the other. Amy, on the other hand, commented on her own enjoyment and did not just say positive things. Her criticism that the work was not colourful enough, not interesting enough to look at, was constructively expressed: *'Maybe you could have used different fonts for the different 'reviews'? I'm sure it will look much better when you put some colourful pictures in.'*

The tone of both evaluations was, in my opinion, considered and seriously undertaken. The mature way in which both these girls handled criticism of their own and others' work was not an isolated one within the class.

Rachael, in evaluating both Louise and her group as a whole, wrote:

'Louise has worked really well during this project, and she was the person who managed to keep us all working without letting us mess about. You could tell that Louise was really enjoying this project - even though she may have got a bit fed up towards the end, as she always had a smile on her face. ..She also had to think pretty fast because Kirsten who was supposed to say half the lottery scene was away - which didn't give Louise much time to sort out what she was going to say..It is a bit hard for me to judge the groupwork questions as I am part of the group - so I would be biased to how it looks and sounds etc..I think this project went really well, but myself and the group had a hard job starting off, as I/we had never had any choice like this

before...If we were to do it again I think that we should work a bit more on the filming side of things because we messed it up quite alot of times...'

I was particularly impressed here with Rachael's understanding of the notion of bias in coming to conclusions about the quality of her own group's work: *'It is a bit hard for me to judge the groupwork questions as I am part of the group - so I would be biased to how it looks and sounds etc...'* Even though she was tentative she still continued with the evaluation: *'I think this project went really well, but myself and the group had a hard job starting off, as I/we had never had any choice like this before...If we were to do it again I think that we should work a bit more on the filming side of things because we messed it up quite alot of times...'*

Antonia wrote this:

'Our group had no difficulty in deciding what sort of work we wanted to do. All of us, for various reasons wanted to work on a performance - a type of cabaret. I am generally happiest when dancing, playing the violin and taking a small part in singing and we allowed each other to contribute a solo or two each so that we organized ourselves as well as each other...I am satisfied with my contribution to the cabaret as I am involved in half of the acts which means I am not dominating the (mini) show or participating too little...We should make ourselves work more quickly and learn to accept criticism in a mature and constructive way.'

Here I am impressed with the sense that Antonia seemed to have of her responsibilities to others, whilst at the same time retaining a healthy interest in her own progress: *'we allowed each other to contribute a solo or two each so that we organized ourselves as well as each other,'* and *'I am satisfied with my contribution to the cabaret as I am involved in half of the acts which means I am not dominating the (mini) show or participating too little.'*

Lisa wrote the following about her own work:

'My own project is on Racism. I drew a picture of a face with one side black and one side white. In addition I wrote a piece of writing on how people are treated. On my drawing I made sure that each side was the same but different colours as I want my work to be judged on fairness. I think that I could have done a little bit more but it took me a few weeks to decide what I was going to do. However, I feel that I put a lot of effort into what I did do. I am quite pleased with what I have achieved and I would like it to be judged, not on quantity but quality. I would like people to look at the work and tell me weather they think I am racist or not, that way if they can tell I know if I have been fair or not.'

I am delighted by Lisa's insight in her latter point, as she seems to have fully understood the personal responsibility in preaching fairness to others. Her learning partner, Cally wrote this:

'She researched it well by looking at books in the Library. She also watches shows on the television which are chat shows, such as Oprah Winfrey and Rikki Lake. They talk about such things as racism. I think these programmes showed her how to balance the views and opinions of others and herself. Her picture showed a good balance so I don't think she showed an unfair arguement...This topic...Lisa finds interesting. Which I think made her put a lot of determination into her work. Lisa has always found it hard to understand other peoples views about them I think she has improved on her understanding. I feel that this piece of work is one of the best pieces Lisa has done in English.'

In my opinion, I feel that Lisa did not have time to develop fully her ideas, and that I did not enable her to do this sufficiently. Lisa has rarely written in her journal and did not wish, it seems, to open her ideas up for discussion. I think if I were to work in this way with a class again, I would probably be more directive with some individuals. Although I was pleased with what Lisa produced, and believe that her work shows insight, I think in places it lacked the depth which a project of this scope and time, could have benefited from if I had intervened more constructively. I think there is a balance for me to make between concern for the individual and concern for the

curricular learning and in Lisa's case I didn't get this balance right. I will be commenting on this in more detail in the final section of this paper.

All the girls presented their work in some form, either through discussion, dramatising, dancing, singing, or readings. Sarah invited other girls to read what she had written and comment on it. Claire's presentation was markedly different. I have written about this in detail in the conclusion to my Ph.D. submission and I reproduce some of the text here. I have included it because it represents as closely as I am able to, an outcome of the democratisation of the educative relationship between Claire and myself. Although I cannot show you the video that I made of her final presentation, I have shown her the notes I made about that afternoon and she has confirmed that it is a fair representation. The following description also shows some of the effects that her presentation had on Sarah's learning, and it enables Claire to speak for herself about her own insights and learning processes.

It was a sultry afternoon on the day of the presentations, the girls all seated in the Hall, chatting amongst themselves. All the presentations were videoed. Claire's was the first to be seen. In her journal she had produced a list of 'events' for the presentation which she used as a guide on the day:

'Burial of the Dead Poem'

Response (of above)

Clay explanation

Criteria for clay work

Mention of 'What the Thunder Said'.

Does it mean something to you?

Footprints

Cage writing & Poster

She started her performance with these words:

'It's this 'feel free' thing. It really meant something to me.'

She had asked me to read out the first part of Eliot's poem as it contained a few lines of German, interestingly enough about a statement of personal identification. She then displayed her claywork to us, describing its various facets and how they related to the poem and to her own sense of freedom. Then she said this:

'For my clay I was told to make some criteria to be judged on. At first I thought, well, I don't really know because I've never done this before. But I came up with some things that were different and I decided that one of the criteria it should be judged on is 'heartfelt' - what it means to me. Because to some other person who doesn't know what it means, it could mean nothing and then I don't think it would be judged so well. You have to put it in the context with the poem. Otherwise it won't mean anything really. It's also another way of expressing my self. I've never really expressed myself in clay before. I mean I've made clay. I've made a polar bear and an elephant, but I've never expressed myself before. What I feel. What my reaction is! There are other things, like the theme and the point of it and the originality that it should be judged on, but the main think is that it's different to everything else I've done.'

I have watched this part of the video many times. Claire appears to me at this point to be unselfconscious and determined. She smiles at the girls as she talks to them. And when she says how much it means to her: *but I've never expressed myself before. What I feel. What my reaction is!* she lays her hand on her heart. On the evening of the presentations I wrote this in my journal:

Claire: I have never witnessed something like this before in my career. Claire's aplomb was beautiful, her movements graceful and liquid; it was as if she were wholly absorbed in the performance. When she talked about the standards of judgement (and I had no idea she was going to do this as part of the performance - she made them come alive doing it this way) her face seemed lit with an inner light and when she expressed what meant the most to her in her work, the 'heartfelt' criterion, I cried, as did other girls. This is, for me, the apotheosis of what education is about - seeing a process of

responsible liberation coming to fruition. Claire enthralled me, and I guess many others, judging by the way they responded after the performance. It is not simply that she was expressing something authentic and important to her in an environment which was facilitative, but there was something about being in the room whilst she did it. that was truly educative. It was moving, sincere, informative, thrilling, and above all, heartfelt. When I return the girls' projects at the beginning of next term, having judged them on their criteria, I know that Claire's will be rated highly, because she has shown such heartfelt commitment to fulfilling her agenda.

Sarah's reaction was beautiful (she cried, overcome with wonder - see later). For those moments during Claire's performance, and particularly when she pointed to her heart - living out the value to her of what it meant for something to be heartfelt - we seemed to be a community. I watched the faces of the girls during Claire's performance. I sensed wrapt attention, admiration, respect, gentleness, enthrallment. I heard and watched her performance with tears in my eyes and at one point noticed that Sarah was also crying. I knelt by her chair.

'Are you all right?' I asked her.

'Oh, Miss, it's amazing!' she replied. Then Claire danced for us to a piece of music whose title was 'The Cage'. She said that it 'comes from my heart', and that was how we were to judge it. At the end of the performance there was a hushed silence as we watched Claire with bowed head, still and silent for many seconds, and then we began to clap. People surrounded her to congratulate her. I found it impossible to find any words at all. I gave her another hug. It seemed the only way to communicate my pride in what she had achieved.

I detail this in such a way because I find it is the next development in this educational narrative which moved me beyond anything I have yet experienced in my educative relationships with learners.

On Friday 21.7.95., the last day of term, Sarah gave me the following letter:

...I really don't know where to begin by writing to you. You've made such an impact

on me, that saying thankyou would be demeaning. You've changed my whole outlook, not only to English, but to other people, and their thoughts and feelings. I used to be very resentful of others who I thought were 'beating' me, and I felt I always had to be first. But it's like trying to race a car with a rocket. They are travelling in different directions, so there is no way they can race. That's just like us. We're all travelling in different directions, and the only race we can win is our own. And by trying to cheat in that race, we're only cheating ourselves. You helped me to realise that.

Instead of resenting people that seem to be better than me, I've learnt to admire them, and be proud for them of what they've achieved. Claire's presentation on Thursday made me realise that. I found myself really admiring what she had done, instead of getting jealous, and despising her.

I also began to realise how wonderful our class is. Claire had the confidence to really show what she felt, and tell everyone her personal feelings. She wouldn't do that to an audience she didn't trust, or felt self-confident in front of. I was really touched by the way she had the confidence to perform in front of us.

And then that's when it hit me about what we were losing. We've built up so much together as a class, why do we have to give it all up? I keep telling myself that being part of a different class will give us different ideas, and views, which I am looking forward to. But I'm still going to miss you so much.

You have really got to know all personally and individually, so anything you wrote or comment on is personal. It helps me so much to know that you really care about what each of us does, and it really gives me something to work for.

I know I said thank you would be demeaning, but I really can't think of another word (a fat lot of good all those English lessons did me!). Thankyou, thankyou so much for everything. All my love, Sarah XXX

In this aspect of the learning process I believe Claire and Sarah were learning something of value to them as individuals. Dewey (1916) writes and I agree with him that:

'Education is literally and all the time its own reward [and that] means that no alleged study or discipline is educative unless it is worthwhile in its own having.' (p.109)

I believe that during this process of articulating concerns, imagining solutions, acting, observing and evaluating, Claire, Sarah and others were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to experience what it meant to do so.

On 8.3.96. I talked to Sarah and Laura about their experiences in our classroom last year. We were asked to talk about it for a newspaper article a sixth former was writing about education at our School. As a result of the interview I wrote to them:

I wanted to write to you both after our quick interview together for the newspaper competition, but I wasn't quite sure how to write it... Yes, it happens to English teachers as well! There was something that struck me very powerfully in our talk with Jess, and it was when you laughed, Laura, when I said that this year I was able to do better educational work with the girls because of what I had learnt from you both and others in the group. Your laugh was so genuine and so full of surprise that I decided I wanted to find a way of telling you both what I had learnt from you as individuals. I hope you don't find this letter presumptuous and don't mind that it is a joint letter, but there is something about what I learnt from both of you that I think bears telling in one place.

I enclose some writing (anonymised) that I have done recently about a truly wonderful teaching and learning experience I have had with one of my Year Seven groups. (Laidlaw, 1996a) I know I could not have had this experience if last year, and you two, and the rest of the group, had not taught me so much. It is a piece of writing about the relationship for me between my love for the girls I teach, my sense of moral purpose

as an educator and the poem by Coleridge 'The Ancient Mariner'. If you don't know the poem, shame on you!

I am going to try and tell you about what I learnt from you because I want you to know how seriously I meant those words in the interview a couple of weeks ago.

Laura, teaching you was always a challenge because you learn in a completely different way from me. You could spend hours seemingly staring into space and dreaming. At the beginning of our collaboration, I used to worry about that. I used to think I had to chivy you along a lot and that if I didn't put pressure on you, then nothing would happen and it would be all my fault. Wrong. It wasn't my issue and I had to learn to trust you, trust your innate wisdom that you knew best how you learn, trust you to take responsibility for your own outcomes, and then to take the credit for them too when you completed that lovely work on Romeo. In the enclosed paper you can see that I am still thinking about that experience of trusting individuals as I try to help Rose with her work. Learning to accept pupils for who they are and not the way it might be convenient for them to be for the teacher, is something I think I will be grappling with for the rest of my career. You started that particular ball rolling consciously for me. And at the end of your own unique way of learning, your work was original and interesting and informative, and I should have known that you would produce it. (And yes I still have it, and yes you can have it back as well. I'll tell you something though, you never taught me the value of getting back end-of-topic work, did you? Failed there, didn't you!!) From you I also learnt about how important a sense of humour can be in communicating what really matters in human relationships. Working with you, writing to you about various aspects of our imagination was such fun and sometimes I think I take things too seriously. You challenged me to look at that and I know that this year (although there's little evidence in the paper, except during the preparations for the presentations towards the end) I have been a little more free and lighthearted than before.

Sarah, from you I learnt something important as well. You did something really noble and brave at the end of last year when you came to me on the Friday and gave me that

letter about Claire's presentation. Your candour touched my heart and I knew that your action represented what I wanted to bring more freely into the world through my teaching - a sense of pride in the achievements of others through a contentment with self. So vital I think. Never before in my career had an incident reminded me of that particular truth so forcefully. If you read the paper you will see how much that particular value becomes explicitly a focus for my enquiry about how I can improve the quality of learning with my pupils. With the problems of discontent that arose at certain times with the Year Seven class, I was able to think about the significance of what you had achieved and try to work with the girls in finding ways towards such maturity for themselves. You, like Laura, learn in a very different way from me. You are more careful than I am about committing yourself to paper and I had quite consciously to step back with you and let you be sometimes. There were times when I wanted to push you and mould you to my image of how a pupil needs to act. I think there will be times when there are certain things that need learning, but I am not always going to be in the best position to know what and when that is. I have to remember that.

You both resisted such impositions from me and in remaining true to yourselves you helped me to remember that you are not simply pupils, vessels to be filled with my knowledge, but people in your own right whose reality is as precious and rich and meaningful as mine and from whom I was able eventually to learn a great deal. Both of you taught me the value of remaining open to the reality of the people I teach so that I might be always a learner more than a teacher.

So Laura, next time I say that I learnt something from you, I hope your laugh is with pleasure rather than disbelief.

I know that in our last lesson together on that Thursday afternoon I said that in one sense our community of learners would never cease as long as we remembered what it was of value we had learnt from each other; I still believe that. I know that I carry you both, and the others in the class, in my heart every time I teach Rose and her class. In that sense we all live on in each other.

It has felt good to write this down. Thank you once again for inspiring a sense in me that life really is great and full of lovely people.

On Friday, 8.3.96. I talked to both of them at lunchtime in order to ask them about their perspectives about what they had learnt last year and the ways in which I had set up the learning processes. We had the conversation which constitutes the opening to the foreword of this paper. What I find of educational interest in the conversation is the degree of apparent openness with which the girls were expressing their views about the learning process they had experienced. They did not appear to be seeking my approval in their constructive comments, but attesting instead to a sense of liberation as learners, as valued centres of consciousness who were capable of speaking on their own behalf about issues which concerned them. They seemed to be reflecting back to me values which constitute my own motives in the educative relationships I develop with the girls, as I wrote about at the beginning of this paper:

'Most of all I love to see what happens when children begin to take responsibility for their own learning and start to see that they are capable of speaking on their own behalf about things which concern them. I see the democratising of the learning processes I engage in with the girls in the classroom to be connected with helping them to take responsibility for their own learning within an environment in which they recognise their responsibilities to others as well as to themselves as they learn something of value.' (p.2)

In the final section of this paper I want to draw together some conclusions about the democratisation of my educative relationships and how I am constructing out of the descriptions and explanations of this process, my own living educational theory.

Creating my own living educational theory.

In the account you have just read you have seen how I have constructed a series of learning processes through an action enquiry cycle. You have seen how I have connected each stage of the enquiry with particular learning processes for each of us.

Although we are all individuals, there are similarities involved in terms of the values and the kinds of questions which are emerging through the learning. For me as an educator, the main question is concerned with how the extent to which we are each of us responsible for the learning processes we are engaged in affects the learning process, the educative relationships and the emergent knowledge. This is also one which Sarah highlighted in the extract quoted in the Foreword to this paper:

Sarah: *'It was scary at first. I thought: I can't do this. Why can't she just tell us what to do. I don't really work very well without deadlines. You didn't always tell us straight when everything had to be done, either. I think you should have done really. Don't get me wrong, I loved it. I really loved working in that way, but it was hard. We're used to being told, do this, do that! And you came along and told us we could do anything we liked. It was really scary for me.'*

I find myself continually connecting personal responsibility with fulfilment and purpose, rather as Yamamoto (1990) suggests:

'All teaching contains an element of mentoring which brings to teaching such unique dimensions as trust, vision, and a sense of immortality...form[ing] a fundamental sense of trust in a seemingly chaotic world.' (p.183)

I want the girls in my care to be able to trust in the worthwhileness of their own lives within what is clearly sometimes a chaotic and mystifying world. In this final section I am going to address the concern I have about the relationship between personal responsibility and worthwhileness in a learning context through a learning experience which shows something of my own educational development as a learner about how to be a better teacher, and the pupils' own concerns about their sense of worthwhileness and purpose. My concern is the one which recurs most frequently in my educational practice and this description and explanation constitute the closest I have come yet to articulating my own living educational theory. When I administered the World Congress in Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management I wrote an article (Laidlaw, 1994a) about the educational significance of recognising my responsibility

for accounting for my own practice to others. I wrote:

'Part of what I mean by doing good in the world is revealed through my coming to understand what it signifies to take responsibility for my actions in the world and to become accountable for them.' (p.120)

I think the concern recurs because of the way in which, when trying to resolve it in my practice, it challenges me to bring together issues to do with a love for the child, my concern to improve the quality of learning, and a sense that life is inherently meaningful and worthwhile. It challenges me to enable the girls to begin to make sense of their worlds in ways which will help them to lead full and productive lives. When I set parameters and when I don't should be issues carefully considered and related to enabling the girls to improve the quality of their learning. I am still learning what it means to engage with the question I formulate from this concern: **'How can I and the girls negotiate power and knowledge in our classroom in ways which improve the quality of learning for each one of us?'** It is a question whose beating heart is the democratic nature of the processes we engage in.

In the above letter to Laura and Sarah, I alluded to some work I have been doing with a Year Seven group (11 and 12 year olds) this year, claiming it as an improvement on what I had managed with their group last year. By improvement here, I am meaning that through creating a closer synthesis between the theory of my practice: 'Good education includes democratising the learning process', and the practice in the classroom, I am claiming that the girls are learning something of significant value to themselves and as learners of English and I am learning how I can improve the synthesis between the theory of my practice and the practice itself. The articulation of this synthesis I consider to be my own living educational theory.

I have been teaching my Year Seven group 'The Ancient Mariner', by Coleridge. In the following extracts from my paper (Laidlaw, 1996a) I explore the relationship between my love of the girls, moral values in action - to do with honesty, trust, right and wrong - and a favourite poem. I examine the ways in which a consciousness of the

connectedness of my love for the girls, my responsibility to help to improve the quality of our educative relationships and the moral values exemplified in the poem, synthesise in an improvement in the quality of our curricular and personal learning. It is not coincidental that the poem I have chosen throughout my teaching career to read with young people, asks similar questions about the purpose of life. It is only recently, however, that I have come to understand why. The poem supposes a morally-biased universe in which not taking personal responsibility for one's actions - seen as evil - and taking responsibility - seen as the good in the universe - are embodied in a story with mythic proportions. The poem enables the reader safely to explore good and evil from a moral perspective which is quite clear about which is which. I believe that enabling pupils to make such explorations as they learn about what is also of curricular value, within an environment in which power is to some extent negotiated between us, is a wholly educative undertaking.

I want now as an exposition of my own living educational theory to present extracts of this paper to you. This might in fact open up a dialogue between us. The series of lessons, which took place over six weeks, started like this, as I noted in my diary:

I then included the extract now in The General Prologue which is my diary account of the first lesson when I read the first four parts of the poem. You can find these extracts on pages 6 - 12. I then went on:

The most important question it seems to me which comes out of this episode is: *'What happens to power in the educative relationship when the pupils are asking their own questions?'*

This is a theme which characterises my own educational development, as its increasing consciousness within my practice enables me to open up the process of learning itself to enquiry in order to improve its quality. Because of last year's experiences with Laura, Claire, Sarah and others, I am now able to focus more specifically on the quality of power within the educative relationship. With Lisa in Year Nine, for example, I did not intervene appropriately because of my confusion about responsibility. This lack of

intervention was partly the reason, I believe, for Lisa's disappointment in her final project.

I have also found that what usefully characterises my own living educational theory is the exploration in practice and accounting for that practice, of the degree to which I can myself, and help others to, make connections between ideas, values and people. In the work that I have been doing with the girls I have managed to make useful connections between my own moral values, the ideas in the poem and the girls. Through my love of the girls, my sense of moral responsibility and my love of the poem I am motivated to try to negotiate as much of the learning process as I can to help to improve it.

After reading the poem to them and organising them to enact some parts of the poem they worked on their own projects with learning partners and interactive journals in order to reveal their understanding of the poem. They also had, as did last Year's Nine group, to articulate their own standards of judgement by which we could judge their work. I will offer you one more extract from my article (Laidlaw, 1996a) in order to show you how I am trying to live out my democratic and other educational values as I account for myself to my learners and to you. The other educational values I am referring to here are to do with fairness, honesty, love and respect.

I then included an extract about my educative relationship with Zoë which you can find on pages 20 - 30. At that stage the paper did not include all the detail about Zoë's work as I had not seen the significance of representing her more fully, points I have already discussed in the Epilogues to Parts Two and Three. From the pages quoted above I concluded the following:

I want a classroom, in fact, in which children feel free to ask questions as Zoë dared to. In which my pupils and I continue to explore the boundaries of power in a bid to improve the quality of learning and relationships. And I also want a classroom in which I can account in practice for my values with my pupils and others. A practice in which

this paper becomes a seamless part of my own educational development as I create my own living educational theory from the descriptions and explanations I can offer for my own practice as I seek to improve it.

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In the final Epilogue, which you are now about to read, I have again written about the Ancient Mariner entirely from my own point of view. As in previous Epilogues, this is because my own views of the poem are used only to illuminate the ways in which I perceive reality. I am not asking them to be taken as the only views on the poem. They are my views, however, and I take responsibility for them.

Epilogue to Part Four
My Educational Knowledge:
Creating my own Living Educational Theory

'Farewell, farewell! But this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.'

It is only at the end of the poem that the Mariner can tell us what he knows to be true and good in Life. He has evolved a sense of what is moral into ethical relationships with others which are characterised by the responsibility he can now take for his own life and the telling of it. His tale seeks to help others to recognise themselves so that there is an appropriate sharing of responsibility. He knows himself at last and through this self-knowledge he is now in a position to move into the world and make a difference for the better in it. His tale is told with poetic beauty, with descriptions that engage the heart and the intellect and compel the listener to attend:

*'He listens like a three years child,
The Mariner hath his will.'*

The Mariner's will is now focused clearly on creating purpose and meaning out of his existence through the telling and refining of his knowledge. His knowledge lives through the people who understand it. This is its purpose. He has now ethically and ontologically identified fully with the purpose of Life as he now understands it. This is how he now knows anything of value. In addition it is not enough for the Mariner to understand what he knows. He is required to communicate his knowledge

so that it will live in the other:

*'Forthwith this frame of mine
Was wrenched with a woeful agony,
Which forced me to tell my tale
And then it left me free.'*

And this is what he knows:

*'He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast...
...He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small'*

I perceive prayer here to mean a direct communication with God, for Coleridge says in the next line:

*'For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'*

In Buber's (1923) terms, the act of prayer characterises an I-Thou relationship in which an individual perceives existence as bounded by divine forces which are beyond the direct influence of that individual. Paradoxically, however, through prayer one becomes part of this divinity and thus acausally, an influence on it. Coleridge says that prayer, in my terms the perpetuation of awe, is effected best through love. And not any kind of love, but one which values all equally: *'both man and bird and beast.'* A disinterested love. In other words when the Mariner loves *'both*

man and bird and beast', he does not seek rewards for himself but is motivated to act ethically with others because he knows himself well enough now to know what it means not to do so. He can only access this love through self-knowledge and vision, through a sensitivity and respect to the world inside and outside himself and a sense of both a great personal power to do good in the world and a humility about the enormity of the task. His knowledge of love is framed in the first place by his blessing of the water-snakes, his first good act, and for which he is also, like the killing of the albatross, fully responsible. At that point, though, his love only surfaces with these particular creatures. It has not yet become a way of relating to the world as a whole, but it does act as a turning point for him. From this he can develop towards a greater capacity for awe, which manifests itself as loving actions in the world. His telling of his tale is an act of love.

In this Epilogue, which acts as a conclusion to Part Four and to the thesis as a whole, I wish to write about my educational knowledge. As a result of my own experiences in the seminar and classroom, my reflections, reading, and conversations, a period of research lasting six years, I now feel that I have something to tell. This telling, however, does not seek to be the didactic and therefore static knowledge that characterises a finished viewpoint, but as I stated in The General Prologue:

'My own educational theory lives in the values as they become explicit in practice over time. It is therefore never complete. It is much more than a snapshot and much less than the truth, but it is living. As I write these words I draw together my past, I describe and explain the present and out of that I try to craft the future. Like the Mariner at the end of the poem I try to understand what I experience and capture it in order to improve the quality of life for myself and others.' (p.25)

I wish to focus on the issues which have arisen in the course of my teacher-research in order to explain what they mean to my own educational knowledge. These are:

- ❑ the significance of an immanent dialectic within the processes of my coming to know and within the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships;
- ❑ creating my living educational theory from the account of my own educational development;
- ❑ my educational intentions in the light of my teacher-research.

Although they are all interrelated, I shall take them in turn in order to render them more comprehensible.

- ❑ **The significance of an immanent dialectic within the processes of my coming to know and within the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships.**

‘Till noon we quietly sailed on
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.’

At the heart of my own educational development lies my deepening understanding of the immanent dialectic. By ‘immanent’ in this context I am meaning an implicitness of a quality at every level within something. For example, as I will explain later, I look for the ethical in every aspect of my educative relationships with students and pupils. My educational research has taught me that I can now focus, for example, on a journal entry to a pupil in order to find within it intimations of such ethical

concerns as I outlined in the Epilogue to Part Two. The quality of the ethical I find in the journal would act for me then as a way of evaluating the educational quality of that journal entry.

During this research I have increased my abilities as a dialectician. I like how Plato describes dialectics:

'The process of asking and answering questions. If we do this, after a long and difficult process of rubbing our conceptions and perceptions together, then suddenly insight and reason flash out and we know reality as it is.' (p.67)

Throughout my research I have asked and tried to answer many questions. These range from 'How can I reveal the nature of an educative relationship?' (Laidlaw, 1991b) and 'How can I write authentically about my educational experiences whilst at the same time maintaining intellectual and academic rigour?' (Laidlaw, 1991d), to 'How can I create my own living educational theory through the account of my educational development?' (this present thesis). I like the idea of rubbing my conceptions and perceptions together so that reason and insight flash out. This is how I experience my own development in terms of improving the quality of my own learning. I hold what Socrates in 'The Phaedrus' called the One and the Many together:

'To all those who are possessed of this power (of apprehending the One and the Many...) I have been in the habit of giving the name of dialecticians.' (p.46)

The One is constituted by the whole, in my case the concept of 'an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships'. The Many is comprised of its component parts, which in my educative relationships are the ethics, ontology, knowledge, and the emergent structures and forms, through which improvements are realised. In July, 1990, when I was struggling to articulate what I meant by improvement in my educative relationships, I had the idea of 'the aesthetic morphology'. I have already written about this revelation in the Prologue to Part One, but the following point is appropriate to repeat here:

'If I am able to bring to my educative relationships the same level of awareness that the picture evoked in me, then I will be able to improve the quality of relationships...I know that there is something in the awareness I was brought to with that picture [Delaroche] that opens me up to the possibilities of goodness and truth and beauty in human existence. If I can understand those qualities more fully, then it follows that I will be able to increase their quality within my own relationships and thus increase their educational value.' (p.100)

My perceptions consisted of how I might be able to work with the concept of 'the aesthetic morphology'. This dialectical process which I have formalised through the action enquiry cycle (Whitehead, 1985) - *If I can bring to my educative relationships the same level of awareness...and understand...then I will be able to increase the quality of relationships* - has enabled me to focus on the resolution of the tensions created between my perceptions and conceptions. In other words, as I have tried to put my perceptions, based on my conceptions, into action, there have been

tensions. I have experienced times when what I thought I was doing was not what was happening around me. In the General Prologue I recorded this:

'I was certain in my own mind of my equality of regard for both of the girls and yet it seemed that my actions were allowing one girl to feel slighted.' (p. 18)

Subsequent analysis (as represented in the Epilogues to Parts One to Three of this thesis) has shown how I have begun to perceive these tensions as aesthetic imbalances in which I have not managed to keep the appropriate balance between the ethics and ontology of my educational practice as a way of knowing what it is I am doing in the name of education.

What I am writing about here is 'the living contradiction' although it has recently been helpful for me to think about as an aesthetic imbalance (Epilogues One and Two). However, I wish to continue to engage with 'the living contradiction' because it has generative connotations which are intimately related to the aesthetic as I understand it. (I will go into more detail about this later in the next section on 'living educational theory'.) Ilyenkov (1977) explains living contradiction in this way, as:

'the concrete of mutually exclusive opposites in the real nucleus of dialectics, its central category...If any object exists as a living contradiction, what must be the thought (statement about the object) be that expresses it?' (p.320)

Mutually exclusive opposites? Well, when I was teaching 'The Ancient Mariner' to my Year Seven girls, I thought I was treating them all fairly as

Griffiths and Davies (1995) describe fairness:

'[It] ...is made up of two strands: one deals with the empowerment of individuals and the other deals with the righting of structural injustice...' (p.4)

But Zoë wrote to me saying she thought I preferred Rebecca and several others to her. This was the exact opposite of my perception of myself either in relationship to individual girls or as someone who was living out her values to do with creating structures through which each child could make the most of her potential. Indeed the morphological aspect of the aesthetic morphology was not being adequately attended to. I was not evolving forms and structures which would enable each child to feel of value in the classroom. I was aware of 'fairness' as a concept, yet I was treating Zoë (and I believe Rebecca too by extension) unfairly. I was thus holding both fairness and unfairness together. Two mutually exclusive opposites.

I find Comey (1972) illuminating here when he writes:

'Every thing or process contains within itself opposing elements that are mutually exclusive and therefore, conflict with one another. At the same time, these opposites form an interrelated polarity so that they presuppose and reciprocally affect each other and, consequently, form a dialectical unity. This unity and conflict of internal opposites provide the impetus for change and development; resolution of the conflict is accompanied by a progression to a new state of development of thinking.' (p.269)

To recognise these opposites is for me to deliberate dialectically: 'what is it I wanted to do?' and 'what is it I have done?' together with 'what can I now do in the light of my new understanding?' I like the way in which Winter (1987) writes about this immanently dialectical process:

'By drawing attention to the developing contradictions within the categories of experience, implicit necessities...will be transformed into explicit possibilities (as metaphors for thinkable futures). (p.152)

Constantly in my educational development I pose questions to which I need to know the answers (in Plato's terms - see above) in order to improve the quality of learning. This is the dialectical process which enables me to improve what I am doing. That process is also characterised by what Eames (1995), quoting from Collingwood (1924), calls a state:

"in which the mind in its struggle to understand, passes through the stage in which its reach exceeds its grasp and barely touches a conception as yet undetermined (p.78)'. (p.104)

In my life I am often inspired by an intimation about what the world could be like. My reach, if you like, exceeds my grasp. I want to move the world to a better place! 'Returning' is the best fictional expression of this to date - as I explained in the Epilogue to Part Three. As a work of fiction I believe it contains a degree of aesthetic balance in which its status as a commentary on the human condition is partly realised through the ways in which aspects like characterisation, symbolism, imagery, human agency

and knowledge fit together in a meaningful way. As a commentary on educational values (as I explained in Part Three) it can only go so far because it was not written as an educational document. It was not conceived of **in the name of education** but as a personal testament to my ontological belief in the meaningfulness of Life.

It is self-contained in a way which my educational research writing cannot be. I created a world in 'Returning' whose problems I could cause and solve. I could make that world perfect. However, it was doomed to failure as a way of 'improving' anything in the outside world. I perceive with McNiff (1993), Whitehead (1993b), Eames (1995), Lomax, Evans and Parker (1996), Hughes, (1996), improvement to be an essential dimension of any claim I can make to educational knowledge. If something claims to be educational, then I believe it must have the desire for improvement at its heart. I had to learn over time how little 'Returning' could help me to improve my educational values. Such values were only going to emerge and be enhanced in practice in the world with my students and pupils as together we tried to improve the quality of learning.

Let me bring the argument back again specifically to dialectics. One of the things which 'Returning' lacked was a dialectical form through which my insights could grow. In other words I was not developing my values through relationships with the world. I wrote about them in an elegant conceptual form. Somekh (1993) writes about dialectics as a process of:

'rational inquiry through posing alternative views: interpretation is a process of systematic searching and hermeneutic reconstruction.' (p.144)

Essentially, what was lacking in my insights about the text's validity as a way of furthering my educational enquiry, were alternative views which dialogue, for example, could have provided. Eames (1995) assumes that dialogue is:

'embodied in the very nature of the way reflective practitioners act and think. Collingwood's view that 'true knowledge' is dialectical, based on the interplay of question and answer, suggests that dialogue is fundamental to a living, developing form of knowledge.' (p.104)

In my educational development I am struck by the significance of dialogue as a way of improving the quality of my educative relationships, as a way of moving towards my ideal which views relationships with others as pivotal - ethically and in terms of the knowledge which can be developed from them.

Dialogue represents the cornerstone of all the morphological aspects of my educative relationships. Although I coined it in different ways then (not using the vocabulary of 'aesthetic morphology', for example) in my article (Laidlaw, 1994b) and its development in Part Four of this thesis, as well as in The General Prologue, I portray dialogue as a way of enabling dialectical processes not only to grow but to flourish. By talking to the girls in the classroom and the students in our seminars about their learning, and about how they learn, I become more able to help them to improve the quality of learning. Through this dialectical process I too learn more about how I learn and thus how I might teach better. McNiff (1993), writes:

'I believe that the best teaching is done by those who want to learn...Teaching transforms into learning and back again to teaching. I think teachers have the key to their own processes of self-improvement by acknowledging they too, are travellers and still have far to go.' (p.10)

In other words, dialogue has the potential within my educative relationships to increase the quality of our understanding in ways which generate the dialectical nature of our educational development which in turn gives rise to improvements. And so it goes on.

In The Introduction I stated this about the importance of dialogue:

'I believe that the quality of my educative relationships hinges upon the quality of dialogue I can encourage. As I wish this thesis to be judged as a contribution to educational knowledge, I think that the actions, writing, reflections and conclusions put forward should be deemed valid or not in terms of the extent to which I can describe and explain how I am contributing to the educational development of myself and my students and pupils through the quality of dialogue I encourage.' (p.49)

By 'the quality of dialogue' here I am advocating a form through which educational meanings can be explored and improved in order to make more explicit the meaningfulness of Life and enhance the quality of learning. This implies for me such dialogues taking place within ethical relationships. I do not perceive dialogue as restricted to verbal exchanges

of meaning, but including correspondence in the form of letters (as depicted in my research in Parts One, Two and Three of this thesis in particular), comments about work in a written form, journal entries etc..

From here I would like to show how a particular value of 'trustworthiness' is emerging during the course of my present research whose theoretical explanation is this text. In order to explain about how I am beginning to emphasise the value of 'trustworthiness' I will need to look at the forms of representation I am using in this thesis. This will also impinge on issues to do with authenticity and truth and the evolving of developmental standards of judgement.

Why should you believe me?

In The Introduction I wrote:

'The aesthetic morphology - because of its relationship to development - is able to give voice to the contradiction at the heart of a dialectical process of representation. It goes some way to bridging the dialectic between process and representation, between truth and time, and between action and significance.' (p.88/9)

I cannot at the points of practice, evaluation and theorising about my practice, usefully distinguish my educational knowledge from the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. This is because the educative relationships are the current, living manifestation of my educational values, and for me the living aspects of my educational concerns are focused on the aesthetic. Aesthetic experience and subsequent reflections on those experiences, as I have shown in The General

Prologue, demonstrated in the use of the leit motif of 'The Ancient Mariner' poem and explained in these Epilogues, connect me to myself and to others in ways which are generative (McNiff, 1993) and potentially educational. In addition, my educational values become explicit and, I am claiming my actions from them more educational, through an ever-increasing concentration on how I might effect an aesthetic balance within the relationships in order to improve the quality of learning for all of us over time. As I said in the Epilogue to Part Three, I believe that we can only know ourselves and others in our actions rather than our words.

But in this thesis all you have are my words, or my reporting of the words of my students and pupils. Why should you believe me? In representing the significance as I perceive it, of an exploration of the immanent dialectic at the heart of my work in education, I am steering my tale towards issues to do with representation (Eisner, 1993), trustworthiness (Kincheloe, 1991: 135), and the evolution of educational standards of judgement (Laidlaw, 1995c) of which I perceive trustworthiness itself to be such a criterion in this thesis. In other words if I am to communicate to you the way in which I believe that my educational processes work, which after all is one of the claims I am making in this thesis, then I need to explain about the significance of my understanding of the immanent dialectic at the heart of my educational processes.

Forms of Representation:

So it is to representation I turn first. This has been a conscious focal point of interest from The Introduction onwards. Because of my emphasis on the aesthetic as a standard of judgement throughout, particularly within the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships (in which

attempting a balance between form and content I claim to be an educative endeavour), my forms of representation must embody this balance and communicate its significance.

Representation as authenticity:

My consideration of the immanent dialectic here is not something I can measure, but is a channel through which I can authentically express my educational values. By 'authenticity' here, I am thinking of Whitehead's (1993b) notion of it in the sense that one accepts the certainty of one's own death as a way of framing the meaningfulness and hence representational power of one's own life. In other words, as I face the certainty of my own death I can then see my own existence in some kind of perspective which gives a morphology to my life that I can develop as I try to understand and refine its purposes. Paskow (1988) writes on this theme:

'the authentic person embraces the fact of his or her own inevitable death with anticipation and is thereby able to hearken to and respond in accordance with the call of conscience.' (p.153)

I will come back to this again at the end of this Epilogue in the section entitled: 'My living educational theory is an act of love and personal responsibility.' For now, though, I wish my sense of authenticity, as I stated in The Introduction to be seen as fulfilling:

'that quality which I bring to education which ensures that I reveal in action and representation those processes which encourage a developing synthesis between the ethics, ontology and aesthetics of my educational practice and a commitment to enabling the

search for mutual and educational truths for all concerned within the learning process and the context.' (p.85)

The perspective I am inferring as 'authentic' in my practice is to do with a sense of the finiteness of my own life and the need to give it a form which breathes meaning into my actions.

The Ancient Mariner understands this in his own way, as he finally accepts what it is he has to do with the rest of his life. His experiences bring him face-to-face with his own mortality. The morphology of his life is ultimately developing through his understanding of the necessity of telling his tale. His rendering of it as a way of creating educative relationships with others is a sign of his own authenticity. He has been forced in an awesome way to consider the certainty of his own mortality and that of his human companions and in the full realisation of death, he makes a decision to concentrate as fully as he can upon making the best use of the time he has left. My desire to comprehend what the immanent dialectic signifies for my own educational development is a similar sign, I believe, of my own authenticity. This authenticity is also symbolised through the experimental forms of representation within this text. In other words as I seek to tell more of the 'truth' (see below) within my own educational development - a cornerstone of authenticity (Paskow, 1988; Kincheloe, 1991; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) - I aim to develop forms of representation which more closely dissolve the tensions between structure and content.

My deliberations about representation (and evolving developmental standards of judgement - including trustworthiness - see later) are

connected in my educational research with a concern to live out my values more fully. I want you to believe this account. I want you to identify with what I do, and one of the aims of this final section of the thesis is to show whether the values which I have been distilling in my practice have emerged onto the page in a communicable form. I believe that this thesis is now in an appropriate form to communicate its values because I think that the form and content fit each other well, and are worthy of serious attention (Foshay, 1995). One of the reasons this is so is due, I believe, to the forms of representation through which I have described and explained my educational knowledge and development.

Representation as truth

As I mentioned in The Introduction: *'I want to pursue the truth, not give it up.'* (p.81) Truth is similar to many of the values I aspire to in my practice - in itself I believe it is unobtainable and does not exist entirely in isolation from other values. In order to explain it linguistically for the purposes of communicating my meanings in this thesis, however, I perceive the truth to be that which approximates in its representation most nearly to the reality I perceive that I live in. Paskow (1988), writes about tellers of the truth, that they reveal:

'better definitions of what is real than does the inauthentic person.'

(p.152)

Wittgenstein (1974) wrote:

'Human agreement decides what is true and what is false...They agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions

but in a form of life.' (p.88)

As I said above, I want you to believe in this account, but I only have my own words with which to convince you. If you are to believe in my truth, then I think it will only occur in the contemplation of the form of life I am representing within this account which claims to know my own educational development. My truth can take different forms and in this thesis I have relied heavily on a metaphorical form of truth in my use of 'The Ancient Mariner' as a device through which my own truth can emerge more fully. Winter (1987) writes this about representing truth:

'The form of representation accomplished by narrative allows truth to be dialectical: the narrative of action can show action's own semantic transformations.' (p.142)

When I had written the General Prologue I was convinced that it was a distinct improvement in terms of representation in comparison with anything I had written before in the name of education. I believe this was because of the integrated nature of description and explanation in a style which both reflects the content and the meaning. I am claiming that I integrate a description and explanation of the educational processes as I write about the significance to my educational development of an understanding of the 'Ancient Mariner' poem. For example I write:

'And carefully, so carefully, as if I were nurturing the spirit myself, I kept the tears from my voice as the Mariner took aim with his crossbow and fired. I felt the dislocation as if it were happening for the first time; ... as if it were happening to me, to the girls, and as if we were all responsible at the same time. I felt as if the art of the poem were becoming a living truth... Together we seemed to be creating the poem and

somewhere in the scheme of things, we were all responsible for the horror which was to follow, as all of us are capable of evil as well as good.' (p.4/5)

My level of identification with the poem enables me to fuse event (reading the part of the poem about the shooting of the albatross) with a description of my perception of the atmosphere in the classroom, and a sense of the growth towards individual responsibility which characterises my own living educational theory. And in the following extract I reflect on my concern for the moral dimension within our present and future classrooms through a series of insights as they turn into intentions:

I see the murder representing the destruction of good by evil. Thus it needed very careful, sensitive handling. If that process were coming alive in our classroom then I had to become an anchor of goodness in these potentially stormy waters. Our very humanity seemed to be being called into question. As the adult in this situation, I must steer these young, possibly vulnerable people through this experience, and achieve educationally what the poet achieves poetically. He explores evil and good from the safety of hindsight and goodness. I must enable the children to explore such profound meanings from a safe haven of kindness, interest in their personal responses, attention to the beauty of the poem, a savouring of the language, and a sense of anticipation of the surreal descriptions to follow. (p.5)

Within any truthful representation of my own educational development I now understand that I must explain the connections between the moral aspects within the classroom and the ways of improving the quality of learning (see Epilogue Two for more details on this area). Bungay (1987), writing about the connections between Truth and Beauty says:

'each moment being related to other moments so that it must be

thus and not otherwise, both determining them and determined by them,' (p. 63)

This also expresses well how I understand what characterises an immanent dialectic within my own educational processes. For example in the above extracts from The General Prologue, my understanding of the morality of 'The Ancient Mariner' is intimately linked to my understanding of the morality in the classroom and to the actions which I need to take in order to bring these qualities more fully into our lives. In the classroom I would like to develop processes with the girls in which what is conducive to improving the quality of learning about something worthwhile in the assumption that Life is meaningful, is immanent within every moment. I would like as well to reflect that desire in the very way I represent such processes. This, I would term a personally truthful form of representation. I believe that The General Prologue maintains this form of truth at a high level of integrity.

I believe that the way in which I present the morphology of my own educational processes through the General Prologue and the thesis as a whole could be a decisive factor in your belief in my truth. I believe this is particularly so in its commitment to developmental standards of judgement through an explanation of the immanent dialectic. I think such forms of representation will also contribute to your acceptance of this text's educational validity. I believe that my 'truth' is not only contained within, but in my relationship to the world as I come to an understanding of what my perspective on the world means to me, and what this means to others around me. I don't believe I can ever fully represent the truth, but the aspiration increases the knowledge I have

about my subject, education, as I try to improve the quality of learning. Furthermore the desire to tell the truth increases the likelihood that I will live out my educational values more fully - one of the fundamental reasons for my teacher-research.

Pursuing the truth is also a choice I am making about the kinds of dialectical relationships which I wish to be active in my educational practice and in the theorising about my knowledge which I do over time. I wish truth to be in dialectical relationship to the knowledge I am developing from my practice. In this sense too, I can see parallels between my own conscious adoption of a pursuit of truth (however unobtainable), and the Mariner's insistence on telling his tale with as much verisimilitude as he can in order to communicate the values that he now cares so much about. I am making explicit attempts to render this text internally consistent in such a way that I am hoping you can then trust its main conclusions in the form of original claims to knowledge. At least I hope you may trust that it contains my truths represented as authentically as possible in the name of education. It seems to me (and others - Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Kincheloe, 1991) that issues to do with truth and authenticity are intimately related to trustworthiness. Therefore an open pursuit of the truth in as authentic a way I know, in which over time I can help the reader to trust these representations of my educational practice and knowledge, seems to be called for.

Evolving developmental standards of judgement:

From here I want to look at the evolving of developmental educational standards of judgement as a manifestation of the immanent dialectic in my work. I am going to examine 'trustworthiness' here, because this

criterion is newly emerging out of my research. Rather than simply writing about 'trustworthiness' as a discrete value within this text, I would like to posit it as a criterion by which you might now wish to be engaging with this writing as you are reading these words. In that way, the writing may express more directly the immanent dialectic within this text. I am also presenting trustworthiness here as a criterion which has emerged directly out of Part Four of the thesis. In other words it can constitute some evidence that I am indeed developing my own educational standards of judgement as my work goes along. The value of 'trustworthiness' has emerged in the course of my practice over time and here it is represented for the first time within this theoretical explanation of my educational practice.

Trustworthiness:

I believe that the value of trustworthiness in my educational practice and theorising about that practice can be usefully understood through the four dimensions of my educational practice: the ethical, the ontological, the aesthetic and the resultant knowledge.

Trustworthiness: a question of my ethics

"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look',
The Pilot made reply.
'I am a-feared.' 'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.'

As I have already stated in the Epilogue to Part Two:

'[Trustworthiness] is ethical for me because becoming trustworthy is a matter of articulating my own concerns and worldview in ways which enable others to identify with them as having value.' (p.349)

I have chosen to resubmit this thesis through my understanding of 'The Ancient Mariner' because an analysis of the poem enables me to access my own ethical concerns in ways with which I hope you will be able to identify. For me the narrator has to be believable. If I cannot believe in him as a real person, then what he has to say will not touch me profoundly. I will not care about him enough, or worry why he does what he does, or whether it has anything to say to me about my own life. I will write more about this later in this section about the connections I make between the parts and the whole in judging either a work of Art or my own educational research. Similarly, I am hoping that you will be able to identify with me as a trustworthy narrator of my own tale because then you might be able to identify with the values I am describing and explaining in this thesis.

Trustworthiness: a question of my ontology

**'That moment that his face I see
I know the man who must hear me.'**

In addition, trustworthiness becomes ontological for me at the point at which I, you and others believe that I am worthwhile as a human being because of the values I try to give voice to in my educational practice and in my life. This means that I feel partly affirmed by others in the act of being taken as a trustworthy narrator of my own tale. This is in keeping with the relational form of knowing (Belenky et al, 1986) that I wrote about in Part One, a form of knowing with which I can strongly identify. This ontological interpretation of trustworthiness as a criterion by which to judge the educational validity of this text and my practice, is an orientation which also sees as helpful in the creation of knowledge,

negotiation about what is of value in human experience.

Trustworthiness: a question of my educational knowledge

'To him my tale I teach.'

Trustworthiness becomes intimately connected to my educational knowledge as I articulate my educational values in my practice and in my writings in such a way that my students and pupils are able to trust the meanings that I evolve with them, and that where appropriate I modify my conclusions in the light of our findings. This is also a basic precept of individually-oriented action research as shown in its enquiry-cycle form. Trustworthiness has a value at the level of theory within this text, in that I am asking you to accept this thesis as the creation of my own living educational theory through an account of my educational development which takes into account negotiation about knowledge. It becomes crucial as well at the point of legitimation as a thesis claiming to be an original contribution to educational knowledge.

Trustworthiness: a question of my aesthetics

*'O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushes from my heart
And I blessed them unaware.'*

Trustworthiness can also represent for me an 'aesthetic' judgement, a criterion which requires you to have a perspective on the whole. Its positioning in this thesis as well is implicitly asking you to make a judgement based upon what you have already seen of my work. I doubt, for example, that you will be able to divorce what you are reading now from what you have read in the previous four Parts. Do you, in fact, find this text trustworthy?

Trustworthiness: a question of immanence

‘He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all.’

As I said before, I cite this criterion of ‘trustworthiness’ as an example of the ways in which in this thesis I am trying to evolve developing educational standards of judgement. I stated in The Introduction:

‘If I advocate a developmental approach to educational research...it seems fitting to encourage an understanding of the standards of judgement I will apply to a developmental process in itself a developmental way’ (p.88).

I have only now come to an understanding of the way in which ‘trustworthiness’, for example, gives me a meaningful criterion through which some of the educational significance of my practice can be understood over time. It is only through the work itself, through the reflections, the writing, the teaching, and the reading that I have come to understand the educational significance to my practice of this particular criterion, and by implication the validity for my practice of my original intuition - that evolving developmental educational standards of judgement would itself be an educational process. As I articulate this educational standard of judgement now I perceive more clearly what it is I have achieved in this thesis. This criterion also points towards the future as a developing standard by which I can judge future improvements in my practice. This is what happens: when I focus on the immanent dialectic I

come to understand with greater clarity what matters in my own educational development. It enables a perspective conducive to educational improvement.

The immanent dialectic remains a metaphor of my educational journey and like most journeys, it throws up events and places, people and relationships and a new view of reality. This thesis, as I keep saying, is much more than a snapshot and much less than the truth. Tackling the immanent dialectic enables me to point towards those values which are significant in the creation of the educational knowledge I am laying claim to as valid in this thesis. I will not be able to explain fully what the immanent dialectic is through any purely linguistic form of representation, but I can tell you what it means to engage with it critically in the name of education.

Inferring the immanent dialectic from 'The Ancient Mariner' as a way of articulating its significance in the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships:

'Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down
T'was sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea.'

In order to explain the significance of the immanent dialectic in the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships I want to raise value-issues through some detailed comments about 'The Ancient Mariner'. In this part of the thesis more than previous Epilogues I need the aid of its poetic truths in order to help me to articulate my own educational knowledge. The purpose of this exploration is to highlight the way in

which the values within the poem emerge explicitly into meanings towards the end:

*'He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small.
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all.'*

These values can be seen to be implicit within the imagery and authorial voice from the outset of the poem. For example:

*As if it had been a Christian soul
We hailed it in God's name.'* (my present emphasis)

I will use an analysis of the implicit and subsequently explicit values in order to illuminate those educational values in my own practice which time and my research are forming into my educational knowledge. In a private conversation in 1992 Jean McNiff referred to this as 'my best thinking to date'.

Questions concerning the character of the Ancient Mariner in my Undergraduate Romantics course were always to do with his possible motives for killing the albatross. He does not feature in his retelling of the tale until the moment when:

'With my crossbow I shot the albatross.'

Why did he do it? What did it mean, both poetically and existentially? I remember we had heated debates in seminars and tutorials. Lectures were

given over to this question as a way (I now think quite a brilliant one) through which we might understand the concerns of the Romantic movement in Literature. It was one of the most exciting times in my Undergraduate studies. I wrote an essay - which I was quite proud of at the time because my tutor said it was clever - in which I put forward the view that shooting the albatross gave the Mariner a sense of being alive. Through the killing, he made a difference, he knew he existed, but in my diary of the time I wrote this:

'March, 1974. It fascinates me why the Mariner killed the albatross. ...I've heard all the stuff about Christian symbolism, the crucifixion, Original Sin, but I don't understand why he did it. The poem strikes me as being so perfect in its imagery, so powerful in its tone and voice, and yet it doesn't make sense. And if it doesn't make sense then it's a flawed poem, isn't it? It has to make sense within its own parameters. That's what poetry does. Make absolute sense. Maybe I'm looking for the wrong kind of meaning and sense....Is the killing just a device like the handkerchief in 'Othello'? A dramatic device without truth. A weakness in the artistry.'

In my own Romantics essay I did not fulfil any requirements about the pursuit of truth through the attainment of valid insights about the poem. I was merely concerned with putting forward arguments which would convince my tutor that I was clever and would assure me of a high grade. I was not, I remember, much concerned with the truth for its own sake in that essay. This represents a weakness in my own artistry, but I have not recognised the significance of that until recently. I was not then aware of

the connections that could usefully be made between each aspect of what I wrote and my motivations for writing it, with any value within the work itself. I judged Art in one way, and my own writing in another (see below for greater clarification of that point). I can now only find in the essay a list of others' viewpoints, the motives for writing clearly centring on the appearance of cleverness rather than a pursuit of truth or authenticity. I had certainly read the 'right' authors in preparation for constructing an answer to the question: 'Why does the Mariner kill the albatross?', but I wrote about the morality of the poem as if it had nothing to do with me:

'Twentieth century interpretations certainly favour an explanation without moral absolutes of any kind. They suggest that it doesn't matter one way or the other. That is simply the way life is. At the time Coleridge was writing it is likely that the poem would have been seen as a Christian parable - no more or less - whereas Victorian fathers had been known to use it as a salutary tale for wayward sons.'

Although this description isn't untrue in the sense that it lies about different kinds of interpretations, there is nowhere in the essay where I take responsibility for my own viewpoint, or show any awareness of the importance of doing so. This now suggests to me that I had learnt very little from the poem. I feel that now, in this thesis, I am showing what it means to take responsibility for my own viewpoint through an increasing emphasis on the connections to be made between how I do something and what happens. I now take the view that focusing on what is immanent within each aspect of my teacher-research is a very useful way of determining my ability to appropriate responsibility wisely as I help to

improve the quality of learning with the girls.

Let me return for a while to consideration of the meaningful connections I am making between Art and my own educational research. In some ways my feelings about what constitutes 'good' Art have not changed much since my Undergraduate days. I still believe that the bad luck of Iago's finding Desdemona's handkerchief, (as I cited a few pages ago) as the pivotal point upon which to hang the whole plot of 'Othello', is an artistic flaw. As a result, instead of the tragedy depending on human weakness and vacillation to create the 'pity and fear' in the audience, (which Aristotle required from great tragedy - and I agree) the result is frustrating and the scale of the tragedy is therefore diminished. If the tragedy relies on coincidence and not human failure, then its moral impact seems to be lessened. Thus I found 'The Ancient Mariner' puzzling. Although I believe the tragedy of the other mariners' deaths remains intact in terms of its moral insight and symbolism - I perceive it as truly shocking - there was still for me the problem of why the Mariner murdered the albatross. If the act was an arbitrary one, simply so that the poet could manipulate events to make a point, then why should I care so much about the Mariner himself? If the Mariner is a mere puppet of his author, then what vested interest, or form of identification with him as another human being, could I have? The intense identification I could have with a flawed human being who does evil in a moral universe which would not accept that evil, a human being furthermore I could genuinely believe in, was not going to happen for me. If that identification didn't happen then I cared less about his subsequent struggles. And if I cared less about his subsequent struggles then I was less in a position to learn from them. He could have nothing to teach me about what matters in life.

Intuition told me that each aspect of the poem should be connected to each of the other aspects in order for its structure and meaning to combine in a way which strengthened the poem's claim to longevity. I wanted that sense of: 'every time I read this I find more in it.' I didn't want to read the poem and find less. I wanted, I suppose, to look into the characterisation and find a way of understanding the value that the author put on life. I wanted to be able to look at the imagery or the symbolism, the outcomes or the beginning, and find the value that the author put on life. And in each way of focusing, I expected to find an orientation to the value the author put on life which deepened and enriched my understanding both of that valuing and the value I put on my own life. I expected to find this, I should say, if I were to judge the poem as a great poem. I looked to the poem to teach me something.

In a similar way, as an educator I would like to be able to look at any conversation with one of my girls in the classroom and find there somewhere an implicit or explicit concern for her welfare through my emphasis on furthering the assumption of the meaningfulness of life as together we learn something of value. I would like to be able to mark her homework and find my implicit or explicit concern for her welfare through such an emphasis. And I would, for example, like to be able to video our classroom and find my concern for the welfare of individuals in the ways highlighted above.

As a device, having the Mariner kill the albatross as a symbol of his fall from grace is certainly clever, but has not always for me seemed to reach beyond symbol into a more universal human meaning. If the murder is a

device, then it only works on the level of symbolism, but what about the levels of truth, meaning, metaphor, human agency, aesthetic balance and knowledge? Somewhere, however, the immense power of the poem's language and symbolism prevented me from finding fault with the poem and seemed to challenge me for failing to understand it sufficiently. I have been haunted by this poem all my adult life, for I have always known intuitively that it can tell me something about the value I might put on my own life and Life in general. The representation in this resubmission is evidence of my concern to find something meaningful for my life that works on the levels of my truth, meaning, metaphor, human agency, and an aesthetic balance in my educational knowledge. I believe now that I have some genuine understanding of the motives behind the killing because I have matured in my ability to perceive the world and what it means for me to have made the choice to perceive my life as meaningful. I have, in other words, been able to connect the killing to the implied values of the author in such a way that the poem maintains for me its essential inner integrity as a work of great Art. I have in part perceived the quality of what I value through my deepening understanding of the poem. In a dialectical sense 'The Ancient Mariner' and I have grown together.

I believe that what differentiates good, from mediocre and bad Art is the degree to which, in Beardsley's (1958/1981) terms, it can give rise to an aesthetic experience in which:

'means and ends are so closely interrelated that we feel no separation between them...the end is immanent in the beginning, the beginning is carried up to the end... Such experience holds before us a clue to what life can be like in its greatest richness and

joy.' (p.576)

In other words, each aspect of the Art should be present in each other aspect. That is how I understand the concept of 'immanent' within my own educational processes. If I were to apply Beardsley's comment to my teacher-research I would, for example, infer and imply the 'aims' of my teaching as necessarily inherent within each aspect of the process with each girl in the classroom. If I want to create ethical relationships with my pupils and students, then I believe that each aspect of every moment with them has to bear in mind what it means to relate ethically with each individual. It has been helpful in improving the quality of my work with Zoë and Rebecca for me to regard what has happened with them not only to be educationally flawed at times, but aesthetically flawed: each aspect was not connected to every other aspect in educational ways - in other words ways in which the assumption of the meaningfulness of life was promoted through improving the quality of learning about something of value. I find it easier to analyse the quality of something aesthetically than educationally. Having such a perspective has enabled me at best to perceive weaknesses in the educative relationships and to try therefore, to improve their educative quality.

I hinted at an example of this with Lisa in Part Four of this thesis:

'Although I was pleased with what Lisa produced, and believe that her work shows insight, I think in places it lacked the depth which a project of this scope and time, could have benefited from if I had intervened more constructively. I think there is a balance for me to make between concern for the individual and concern for the curricular learning and in Lisa's case I didn't get this balance right.' (p.500, my present emphasis)

Apart from the allusion to the necessity for balance which I write about in detail in the Epilogue to Part One, I allude to the likelihood of the unhappy outcome of Lisa's research as a flaw in the way in which I had helped her to structure her own learning. I am inferring from the highlighted comment above a sense of the importance of maintaining an aesthetic balance through an awareness of what happens when this balance is disturbed, or pursued without sufficient understanding. My aesthetic failure in the above process was not to have each aspect of the educational processes immanent within each other aspect. This was largely, I now believe, due to a lack of understanding. What is helping the understanding is an analysis of the process in the light of its perceptible outcomes. As I reflect on what happened I can begin to understand what should have been immanent in the processes and wasn't. Just as I look at 'The Ancient Mariner' and tried to infer literary value through the ways in which its connectivity enhances its ability to promote something of value about the human condition, so I look to my own educative relationships and try to infer educational value through their ability to promote something of value about the human condition through an improvement in the quality of learning.

Let me for the moment return to the development of my insights about the connections I can make between great Art and the improvement of my educational research. I believe with Tolstoy that great Art:

'in its widest and most practical application, is the consciousness that our well-being, both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood

among men [sic] - in their loving harmony with one another.'

(p. 234/5)

I believe too that great Art worthy of its name should recommend our evolution as a species and not the entropy of destructive and evil forces. By 'evolution' here I am taken by Peck's (1990) description of it as a force within an individual's, and humanity's, development as a whole:

'Each of us has his or her own urge to grow, and each of us, in exercising that urge, must single-handedly fight against his or her resistance...Those who achieve growth not only enjoy the fruits of growth but give those same fruits to the world. Evolving as individuals, we carry humanity on our backs. And so humanity evolves.' (p.285)

I believe that Literature in which the authorial voice does not take issue with the evil in some way that reaches beyond rhetoric and into the very structure of the Art itself, is part of the evil it depicts. I would go further. I believe that such Art does not simply reflect the evil, it helps to create it. Thus it follows if I am to apply this reasoning further that 'good' Art helps to create and sustain the goodness around it.

In my own educational research writing I use some of the same standards of judgement when I am seeking to evaluate it as I would a work of Art. What constitutes for me the 'good' in my educational research writing is its concern, depicted over time, with those values which strengthen my and my students' and pupils' abilities to find ways to perceive the meaningfulness of Life through moral considerations as we try to

improve the quality of learning. (See the Epilogue to Part Two for a fuller explanation of this aim.) I believe that becoming accountable for such an aim may add to my ability to act towards this aim in my educational practice. In a similar way the Mariner hones the educational value of his insights by becoming accountable for his claim to be improving his life - by making his tale public - by teaching it to others.

After the Mariner has murdered the albatross, forces come into play that enable him to recreate his orientation to reality. Instead of existing in, and thus creating around him, a nihilistic universe which perpetuates the meaninglessness he believes to be a constant, he begins to unlearn his past in order to create his future in the image of God instead. In other words he is responsible for what he does in this life, for good or evil. He cannot either opt out of interacting with the world altogether or create mayhem without paying the price. Once he realises that, he is then free to make his life purposeful for the good: he can lead a consciously meaningful existence. This becomes possible only at the moment when he overcomes his 'fiends':

*'I looked to Heaven and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.'*

Immanent in the above quotation, if he were to follow this through, is a perpetuation of his evil. A state of stasis. Only the reality behind the words:

*'Oh happy living things,
No tongue their beauty might declare,'*

is able to break through the evil and become the blueprint for all the events that he creates subsequently. It is only by the reality of the contradictions within him (see later in this section for a fuller explanation of the term 'contradiction') that he begins to learn how to lead a life in which he is capable of maintaining ethical relationships with others. Through the aesthetic experience of perceiving the creatures' beauty, he recognises the significance of happiness. In Beardsley's terms, he can now appreciate what life can be like in its greatest richness and joy. Before this moment he does not experience happiness, richness or joy, just as he does not seem to see them around him at any point in the first part of his tale. After Death has touched him intimately he becomes aware of the wonder of being alive. The juxtaposition of 'happy' with 'living' (*'Oh happy, living things'*) associates the two states for the rest of the poem. It prefigures the purpose as well as the process of his future life. It can also, I believe, be perceived as a message for all of us, what Tolstoy might have called his 'growth of brotherhood'. It describes both a preferred state of being and the deep connections between an awareness of what it means to be alive (existentially, psychologically emotionally and morally) and to be happy.

The happy living is associated in the poem with the beautiful and the good. I know it has something profound for me to understand as an educator. Recognising the different ways in which the phrase 'happy living' in the context of the beautiful and the good can be interpreted, gives me hints about the potential purposes and processes within my own

educational life in the ways I and the girls can relate to each other as we try to improve the quality of learning about something worthwhile.

At the end the Mariner is focused on developing the dialectic between happiness and leading an ethical life. For him this means developing responsible relationships in the name of God. I am focused on developing the dialectic between the promotion of the meaningfulness of life and improving the quality of learning in the classroom with the girls. For me this means taking the responsibility for developing an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships in the name of education. The Mariner evolves his tale responsibly in the name of God. I am moved to tell my tale responsibly in the name of education.

In my research into the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships I have learnt over time how significant it is for me to focus on a balance between the dimensions within those relationships. Balancing the ethical, ontological, aesthetic and knowledge-aspects of my practice I am claiming, enhances their educational use-value. I believed that at the beginning of this research. In Part One I wrote:

'Through coming to an understanding of a standard of judgement which I term an aesthetic morphology, I am claiming that I have enhanced the educative nature of my educative relationships.'

(p.168)

As I understood it then, I believe that I did improve the quality of learning - my own and Sarah's - through an analysis of the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. For example, I helped her to speak more in

her own voice about issues which concerned her than I had managed in previous years with Zac and Justine, and with Jenny as I explained in the Epilogue to Part One. However, as this resubmission shows, my better understanding of the aesthetic as well as the morphological, and then my conscious relating of them to the immanent dialectic within my practice, have enhanced my comprehension.

The Ancient Mariner must try again and again to understand what the murder means. At first he merely thinks he has to say sorry, and that only seems to be so that he can forego his punishment:

*'Oh let me be awake, my God,
Or let me sleep away.'*

To become truly sorry for the murder he must connect his deed with its consequences. He must understand how implicated he is in everything that happens to him - implied by the weather, the conditions which occur on board ship after he has killed the albatross, and his internal monologues - and begin the immense effort of changing his inner turmoil into outer harmony. He must see the relationships between his own ethics and ontology as a way of taking responsibility for his future life and a way of creating around him the insights he has now come to.

I now understand the aesthetic as requiring an appropriate balance of the ethical, the ontological and the knowledge in my practice in order to render the practice as educational as possible. (See Epilogue One for an explanation of this insight). Part of the reason I have come to understand the value of the aesthetic as a developmental standard of judgement

within my educative relationships is to do with the insights I have had through the poetic truths in 'The Ancient Mariner'. These poetic truths have had the effect of illuminating my understanding of my own educative relationships through which I have tried to improve the quality of learning. I believe as well that my educational practice has benefited from my greater understanding. As I state in The General Prologue:

'Questions of personal responsibility seem to be so crucial to the learning process, but I need constant reminding about how such questions can most educationally manifest themselves in living relationships with others. I think this is to do with the forms of my educative relationships, what I am calling elsewhere their morphology, for example, the interactive journals, the learning partners, the educational standards of judgement, their presentations of their understanding. I seem to be searching for a form in which educational questions can be opened up to the learners in order to improve the quality of learning for us all.' (p.24)

Searching for that form has been one of the most creative aspects of my educational research because it has channelled my insights through issues to do with authenticity, truth, responsibility and trustworthiness to the extent that in its present form, my thesis represents the fullest expression to date of an immanent dialectic at the heart of my own educational processes.

Between the immanent dialectic and the creation of my own living educational theory

In the light of the above quotation, I wish to build a bridge between my discussion of the immanent dialectic and the second issue raised at the beginning of this Epilogue: *'Creating my living educational theory from the account of my own educational development.'* Much of my previous

research seems to have been concerned with a complex major issue. It first surfaced consciously in my work with Sarah which appeared in Part One of the thesis and was included in Whitehead (1993b) in an adapted form. This became the basis of a published article (Laidlaw, 1994b) in which I discussed my attempts to democratise the learning relationship through dialogue. Early in 1996 I wrote the first draft of The General Prologue and within it I posed the question: *'What happens to power and knowledge in my educative relationships when the learners are asking their own questions?'* I had not at that time formulated it as an action research question which would have enabled me to tackle it practically. It had arisen, however, as a genuine concern out of my research. I did build on that for the paper which constitutes Part Four of this thesis and which I presented at AERA (Laidlaw, 1996).

I ended that text with this:

'I am still learning what it means to engage with the question I formulate from this concern: 'How can I and the girls negotiate power and knowledge in our classroom in ways which improve the quality of learning for each one of us?'. I want a classroom in which children feel free to ask questions as Zoë dared to. In which my pupils and I continue to explore the boundaries of power in a bid to improve the quality of learning and relationships.' (p.512/3)

In my search for a form in which educational questions can be opened up to the learners in order to improve the quality of learning for us all, I am recognising that out of my research, a growing emphasis on questions to do with power and knowledge in my educative relationships is emerging.

Answers to this question are outside the scope of this thesis, however. This text is a transition structure between my past, present and future research. In order to explain the significance of trying to find an appropriate morphology in which questions like the above can be addressed, it is, however, fitting for me to alert you to the dimensions which are emerging during its course. A concentration on an immanent dialectic enables me to clarify those areas of my values which my practice and resultant knowledge are finding problematic. The relationship between power and knowledge in my educative relationships I am experiencing as tensions due to, I suspect, aesthetic imbalances in my dealing with them. I will look in more detail at this in the final section of this section when I am discussing my intentions after the completion of this thesis.

In this final section of my present claim to educational knowledge I am seeking to explain, in other words to synthesise, my educational values into a communicable form. Issues to do with power and knowledge in my educative relationships constitute a present synthesis of my educational research. These are developing the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships, an explanation of the immanent dialectic at the heart of my practice and the creation of my own living educational theory. I believe that my educational development can most appropriately be discussed through these issues. I realise that the above claim needs some substantial explanation. I aim to do that in the rest of this conclusion to my thesis. I would now like to discuss the second issue I mentioned at the beginning of this Epilogue:

□ creating my living educational theory from the account of my

own educational development.

‘The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.’

In this section I would like to continue the discussion of the above claim as I explain how this thesis represents my own living educational theory through the account of my educational development. I will also be bearing in mind that the whole of this Epilogue seeks to conclude the thesis with an explanation of my educational knowledge. In addition I will put forward the argument that a claim to original educational knowledge can be made through the account of an individual’s educational development in the form of her own living educational theory.

I would like to explain my choice to create my own living educational theory through a brief description of some of the educational research background over the last twenty years. I am doing this because I believe that the notion of living educational theory has not emerged spontaneously, but can be seen to be a creative and original response to some of the recent developments in educational research. I believe, with Hughes, 1996, that understanding the antecedents to an educational process can help an individual to communicate how improvements are made in her present practice. In particular I want to develop here a focus on the history of the values, and forms through which the values were focused, as I feel that this will give you a better understanding of the choices I have made which have led me to the creation of my own living educational theory. I will do this by drawing out as I go along the similarities and differences to my own approach.

As I mentioned just prior to this present section, I am concerned about the distribution of power and knowledge within my educative relationships. I believe this to be a helpful way of focusing on why I am committed to creating my own living educational theory. It seems to me that issues surrounding who has the power and knowledge within my educative relationships are paralleled by the ways in which the knowledge itself emerges. In this section I want to draw your attention to the ways in which I perceive power and knowledge to have been distributed in earlier forms of educational research as a way of helping me explain why the creation of my own living educational theory is an authentic response to my understanding.

Significant points of historical reference in the creation of my own living educational theory:

My living educational theory approach can, I believe, be seen as having its roots in the idea of single cases as valid forms of educational research, just as Action Research can be seen to have its origins in the work of Kurt Lewin (Kemmis, 1988), for example, or alternatively with Jacob Moreno (Gunz, 1996). The purpose of this present argument, however, is not to determine where something came from but to explore present emphases through an understanding of past ones in order to understand something more of their value-systems and the forms in which the values are expressed.

Case Study

In 1975 MacDonald and Walker asserted that:

'Case-study is the way of the artist who achieves greatness when, through the portrayal of a single instance, locked in time and circumstance, he [sic] communicates enduring truths about the human condition. For both scientist and artist, content and intent emerge in form.' (p.3)

I like the emphasis in MacDonald and Walker's quotation above on the individual's capacity to communicate something of real value about human beings. That is the starting point for me in my own research: if I sufficiently explain myself, the contexts I am in and the ways in which my values emerge over time in their complex dialectical relationships, and in a form in which the content is sufficiently in a symbiotic relationship to it all, then I will have something of enduring worth to communicate to others. This too, is what the Ancient Mariner does, by setting the scene for his story, by relating events, and then by connecting the aftermath to the motives and responsibilities he incurs for the future. And all in a form which compels the listener to attend, which captivates the imagination, the heart and the mind in a powerful synthesis:

'He listens like a three years child.

The Mariner hath his will.'

His tale has enduring truths which he manages to communicate to the Wedding Guest:

'A sadder and a wiser man,

He rose the morrow morn.'

I believe in the value of what I have to say in the name of education. It

matters to me that, as MacDonald and Walker say above, *'content and intent emerge in form'*. It is for me one of the hallmarks of the truth and authenticity of this account that the values shine through in the representation. (See The Introduction and previous section of this Epilogue for a fuller explanation of the terms 'truth' and 'authenticity'.)

As early as 1978, Stenhouse produced his rationale for case-study as a humanistic methodology for enhancing the educational nature of the teaching profession. He perceived research as *'systematic enquiry made public'*, developed through techniques such as interviews and observation, creating documents which then were to become public records. He claimed that such a form of research increased the democratic potential of the educational processes and emphasised the importance of values in shaping meaning and knowledge (Stenhouse, 1980). He recognised the significance of practitioners having the power at least partly to be creating their own educational knowledge.

In 1981 Elbaz supported the idea that detailed studies of single teachers make a contribution to our general knowledge of the profession. In 1983, Skilbeck summed up Stenhouse's stance towards teachers as researchers:

'Central to Stenhouse's view of education is the teacher, not the pupil, the school, the providing authorities or the policy makers. It is the teacher, purposive and free, informed by knowledge and understanding, with clearly articulated values and a repertoire of practical skills that he saw as the central agent in the educational enterprise and the ultimate focus of his views on research.' (p.12)

Stenhouse focused attention on teachers as agents in their own development. This was new. Rudduck and Hopkins (1985) quote him as saying:

'Researchers should justify themselves to practitioners, not practitioners to researchers.' (p.19)

In 1986, Maxine Greene wrote that case-study research could not be done:

'by people who see themselves as detached, neutral observers.'
(p.69)

In my own form of educational research, it is the lack of neutrality that gives me and other individually-oriented action researchers the parameters of my educational research. Popper (1963) in his study of the growth of scientific knowledge, 'Conjectures and Refutations', writes that in any assertion of truth:

'there should be some...criterion...of well-foundedness' [in which]
'truth is what we are justified in believing'. (p.225)

He also asserts that:

'We want more than mere truth: what we look for is interesting truth...which is hard to come by and which...has a high explanatory power.' (p.229)

In 1988 I conducted my own case-study research (Laidlaw, 1988) as part of my M.Ed. studies here at the University of Bath. It focused on individuals' educational development as they designed their own self-evaluation profiling system, and the process of this research convinced me of the efficacy of studying, in MacDonald and Walker's (1975) terms: '*an instance in action*' (p.4). I finished my dissertation with these words:

'I have been discovering my own fundamental values which of course, always lose something in the telling. I am coming away from the experience believing that I have learnt something and that the writing of this dissertation marks a significant stage in my own educational development.' (p.88)

Case-study enabled me to begin the journey which you see ending here (in its present form). Through deliberation on '*a single instance locked in time and circumstance*', (op. cit, p.3) I was able to use the case-study form to communicate my emerging knowledge. I did not wish to conform to the constraints as I perceived them, of issues to do with generalisability which would require me to infer meanings for others through my own and my pupils' experiences. In answer to a possible criticism of the lack of generalisability in my dissertation, however, I wrote this:

'The case study may not be able to isolate a causative agent in Nature, such as can be required as a proof in Physics, for example, but it may be able to capture a moment in human activity which will reverberate in the minds and hearts of others in a way that will extend their understanding.' (p.11)

Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1980) call this perspective on generalisability *'the shock of recognition'* (p.52), Stake's (1975) 'naturalistic' form. He wrote :

'what becomes useful understanding is a full and thorough knowledge of the particular, recognizing it in new and foreign contexts.' (p.69)

Conducting a case-study convinced me that if I were to continue to a Ph.D. I would need to find a form of research which would enable me to my own satisfaction, to explain my own educational development as I tried to improve the quality of learning with myself and others. In my journal of the time I wrote this:

'April, 1989. I wonder whether I could do a Ph.D.. I don't want to do someone else's research, though. I want to do my own. I used to be a bloody good teacher at times. I ought to have something to say. I really got a lot out of my dissertation.'

Research on Teachers

In the mid-eighties, the shape of educational knowledge was essentially moving away from people like Peters and Hirst (1970) with their recommendations of the disciplines approach, which, simply put, expressed the idea that teachers were not on their own in a position to create improvements in their practice. These would come through the applications of theories coined from the sociology, history, psychology and philosophy of education. (See Part One for a detailed analysis of the history of educational action research over the last twenty years and the

breakaway from the disciplines approach in the eighties exemplified by Whitehead's work). Rhodes (1986), however, writes that in Stenhouse's work (as exemplified in the Schools Council Humanities Curriculum Project), and in the work of John Elliott (in the Ford Teaching Project):

'the informing values and norms of educational practice were identified and analysed by 'outsiders' (the researcher as researcher model). They could not therefore be construed as the 'pure' model of teacher as researcher argued for in the writings of Stenhouse (1980, 1983, 1984).'' (p. 28)

In terms of values I perceive a similarity in the approaches to educational research described above which stipulate that individual teachers are not wholly competent to create knowledge from their own practice as they try to improve it. In Stenhouse's case, the 'outsiders' were from education but they believed themselves to be in a position to tell the teachers what the knowledge was. In the disciplines approach, the improvements through research were not based on the individual teacher's experiences in their own classroom but on knowledge gleaned from outside it and then applied within it with no practical links made explicit between understanding and application. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) take issue with research **on** teachers and their practice, as opposed to the teachers themselves organising and carrying out their own research into their practice in order to improve it. They write about research on teachers:

'Teachers are expected to be the eventual recipients of the knowledge generated by professional researchers. That is, they are expected to acknowledge the value of researchers' work for

their own professional practice and to accept its validity for their day-to-day decisions.' (p.1)

The view of teachers and researchers as separate is one to which Calderhead (1993) seems to subscribe:

'Work on narratives and journal writing has been used to justify reflective practices in some programs and also to provide a methodology, but the use of such approaches...raises many questions that are important to explore in order to extend our understanding of professional development. For instance how does journal writing contribute to ...professional development? Is it inspiring confidence through valuing the person.'

(p.17, my emphasis)

In the above view of knowledge, such phrases as 'professional development', 'journal-writing' and 'inspiring confidence' appear to be without specific contexts or people in mind other than a theoretical pre-service education and a theoretical group of students who undergo these processes. The 'our' of the above comment is a rhetorical one and not, therefore in a dialectical relationship to the particular processes alluded to. I agree that I, for example, might need to understand more about the ways in which journal writing with my Year Seven group works. Or doesn't work. Why, for example, did some of the girls cease to write in their journals after only a few months into this year? Were they bored? Did it no longer serve a purpose for them? Did they feel secure, or did they not trust me enough to continue doing so? Did they perhaps perceive that I would not give them the quality of attention that they required? Reading

about the experiences of other teachers as they have tried to work with journals (de Cet, 1991) has helped me to focus on issues I may not have thought of myself. Let me give you an example from my Ph.D. journal where I deliberate about this very issue:

'March, 1996. I wonder whether I'm getting the balance with some journals wrong. I read Daniela's [de Cet, 1991] account about her use of journal writing with her mixed GCSE English group. She focuses very clearly on the curricular with her pupils and the tone of their entries is very different from my girls'. I wonder perhaps whether I need to steer their self-absorption into more curricular channels, and yet in ways which continue to reveal my respect for their individuality and their needs as people. I wonder whether my journals have become rather too concerned about the personal and not enough about the curricular. It's a question, as always, of balance.'

I want to make it clear that I do not reject the research and ideas of others in the formation of my own educational knowledge. I also accept the criticism of my external examiners in the previous submission of this thesis that:

'The problem about meanings is also a problem for the relation of your work to other theorists...

Without Daniela's insights about her own research, for example, I might not have been able to imagine solutions to my own classroom problems. Without the writings of people I have drawn on in this thesis I would be

in less of a position to understand what it is about the creation of my own knowledge that I need to focus on in order to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. In the end, though, I claim that I need to be in the position to take responsibility for my own viewpoint because the focus of all my educational research is to improve the quality of learning for myself and others for whom I am responsible.

Teachers-as-Researchers or Teacher-Researchers?

Elliott and Sarland (1995) write that:

'The teachers as researchers movement is now 25 years old in the U.K.. It has proved remarkably resilient over a period of considerable educational change and its leaders have played a key role in the spread of the movement internationally.' (p.373)

I have been consciously influenced by the teacher-as-researcher movement in my own educational development as I began to explain above in terms of my own case-study work. At this point I want to look at the terms 'teacher-as-researcher' and 'teacher-researcher'. I am a teacher-researcher. This is what I tell my girls at school and the point of view that this thesis takes. This is how I have represented myself in the public arena (Laidlaw & Whitehead, 1995; Laidlaw, 1996). I see the term 'teacher-as-researcher' to suggest an emphasis with which I do not wish to identify. It connotes for me teachers acting as if they are researchers. Being a teacher-researcher for me means that both the teacher and the researcher are equal and in fact in a symbiotic relationship. Such an emphasis shows you something about my own understanding about the creation of my educational knowledge. What I am writing about in this thesis is the

creation of my own educational knowledge and its relationship to the people and the contexts I am in - as a teacher-researcher in a school, in the academic community at the University at Bath, as a teacher-researcher in such communities as AERA and in my publications (McNiff, Whitehead, & Laidlaw, 1992; Laidlaw, 1994b, Laidlaw & Whitehead, 1995; and Laidlaw, 1996). I am not writing about the creation of educational knowledge, but taking the viewpoint, that I can create my own educational knowledge as I help to improve the quality of learning, a view which is the foundation of all of Whitehead's work (Whitehead, 1993a&b).

The teacher-as-researcher or teacher-researcher movement has had its detractors. In order to make more clear the position I am taking in this thesis as an individual exercising her right, I believe, as well as her capacity, to create her own living educational theory, I want to look briefly at Hammersley's (1993a) critique of the movement. He comes from a quasi-positivist viewpoint (Hammersley, 1993b) and thus his arguments constitute an opposed stance to my own. He makes the point, when referring to the way in which qualitative research requires a closeness between researcher and researched, that:

'In my view...the epistemological assumption that seems to underlie this argument - that knowledge comes from contact with reality - is unsound. This is because all knowledge is a construction: we have no direct knowledge of the world.' (p.432)

I disagree with this viewpoint to the extent that I am resubmitting a thesis which puts forward my own knowledge! Putting aside my unease at anyone's certainty about all knowledge: *'all knowledge is construction'*

and the absolute of: *'we have no direct knowledge of the world'*, I still cannot put aside my own experience of being in this world. Hammersley claims to be writing about everyone: *'we have no direct knowledge of the world'*. But I do not find myself in Hammersley's ascription of 'we'. What of my and other people's aesthetic experiences, for example? If what he writes above is a Truth, then this whole thesis must be a Lie! When I sat on the bench in Zarrentin I know - *I* know - that somehow I had some direct knowledge of the world, but not in a way that I can prove through measurements or facts. I cannot even adequately in words explain what that knowledge was. I can only comment on the effect that it had on me then, and surmise how it may be influencing me as I try to improve the quality of learning with the girls in the classroom. I account for this experience in Part Three of the thesis and its Epilogue. I am also surmising the influence of my experience now as I create my own living educational theory. My experience in Zarrentin is similar, it seems to me, to the one the Mariner has when he blesses the watersnakes, and the other when he sees his homeland:

'Oh dream of joy! is this indeed

The lighthouse top I see?

Is this the hill? is this the kirk?

Is this mine own countree?'

He is moved at once to understandings which, before the experiences, were beyond him. He has come back to the same place, but he knows it anew and in ways which will alter his view of reality for always. If he had not gone away, he could not have come to know the value of what he already had. This affects the way he can behave in the future. Direct-

knowing (Reid, 1980) is beyond the scope of a form of knowledge which seeks proof and absolute separation between the knower and the known as Hammersley seems to be suggesting it ought. Reid writes about musical knowledge, for example:

'Real musical intuitive knowledge is direct as the arrow. Many insightful things, in forms of knowledge-that or knowledge-how can be said by musicians: but musical knowledge, qua musical, does not reach its musically cognitive consummation finally from knowledge-that or knowledge how. Rather, knowledge-that or knowledge-about, music, in itself derives from direct musical gnosis, musical intuition.' (p. 48)

I can recognise myself in the way of knowing which Reid outlines above. Much of my research has been a process of uncovering ways of articulating and explaining what my direct knowing actually means in terms of my own educational development.

Hammersley concludes his article with this:

'My aim has been to counter the proposal that the roles of teacher and educational researcher should be integrated... In my view this is undesirable from the point of view of both research and teaching.' (p.441)

This thesis wishes to claim that in my own educational development (as I show increasingly through the various parts of the text), my perception of my roles of teacher and educational researcher as integrated, has led to an

enhancement in my ability to help to improve the quality of learning. Although I am not advocating what other teachers should do, I am asserting my right to be a teacher-researcher, for I have found the immanent dialectic within that confluence to be the greatest aid to my own educational development I have yet discovered.

Let me return to the discussion of other forms of educational research in the creation of knowledge. In 1988 McNiff openly advocated teachers creating their own knowledge as they asked questions of the kind, 'How can I improve my practice?' This followed the Whitehead approach to action research, although it described and explained the other forms too. In it she includes three practitioners speaking for themselves on issues which concern them as they try to improve the quality of learning. In that sense the book is ground breaking because it describes and explains and shows the values underpinning individually-oriented action research through a focus on individuals taking responsibility for their own viewpoints within the contexts in which they work.

Teachers as Learners

So far then, I have shown the growth in the literature of a focus on teachers researching their own practice. In the nineties, this begins to include the switch from teachers thinking about themselves as teachers and becoming learners in their own research. In 1993, Cochran-Smith and Lytle, for example, wrote in order to:

'question the common assumption that knowledge for teaching should be primarily outside-in - generated at the university

and then used in schools - a position that suggests the unproblematic transmission of knowledge from a source to a destination.' (p.xi)

McNiff (1993) bases her whole book on the educational advantages, as she perceives them (and I agree with her) of teachers perceiving themselves as learners. In the same year Somekh writes about this switch of emphasis in the following way:

'A peculiarity of current research into teachers' thinking seems to be its concentration on teachers' thinking about teaching rather than on the way in which teachers learn.' (p.142)

I particularly like her focus on learning rather than teaching, which is specifically what I am exploring in Part Four of this thesis in a bid to improve their quality. In Part Four I claim that my ability to perceive myself as a learner in the classroom has educational advantages as I help others to improve the quality of their learning. I would also contend that it impinges on ethical issues to do with fairness and respect for others in my educative relationships. I am claiming in this thesis that it is partially the ways in which I develop the ethics in my practice which render my emerging knowledge from it educational.

What is my living educational theory like?

From here I would like to focus on what my living educational theory is like, because in this way I can draw on the above as I explore issues which characterise it, whilst at the same time representing my account in an authentic and truthful way (see discussion on 'the immanent dialectic' in

the previous section).

My living educational theory makes its own claims about validity:

Let me turn to issues to do with validity in educational research, which is largely what this historical description has so far been about in this section of the thesis. (See again The Introduction and Part One for a description of the issues surrounding validity in educational research.) There have been great debates about the valid representation of educational and teacher-knowledge (Eisner, 1993; Lincoln, 1993; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Kincheloe, 1991; Laidlaw, Lomax and Whitehead, 1994) and what constitutes that knowledge (ed. Day, Calderhead & Denicolo, 1993; ed. Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). I am claiming that one of the validating principles of the individually-oriented action research paradigm in its incarnation as living educational theory, is that it has enabled an individual to speak for herself on issues which concern her as she helps to improve the quality of learning with others (Laidlaw and Whitehead, 1995).

This is not a widely held tenet. However, it is now gaining ground in public accounts (Eames, 1990, 1995; Evans, 1995; (ed.) Jones, 1995; Laidlaw, 1994b, 1996; Laidlaw and Whitehead, 1995; McNiff, 1988, 1993; Lomax, 1994a; Lomax, McNiff, Whitehead, 1996; McNiff, Whitehead and Laidlaw, 1992; Whitehead, 1985, 1989, 1993b). The assumption I and the above researchers are making, is that such a stance is of itself educational and can make an original contribution to educational knowledge. I realise, however, that I cannot simply rest my case on the past achievements of other people. Indeed, it is crucial that I both make my own case and place it within an identifiable context. I agree that I need to contextualise any

knowledge that I am making in order to communicate its value.

One way in which 'living educational theory' has been taken up in an academic community was in the summer of 1995, when the whole of an edition of *Teachers Education Quarterly*, published in California, was devoted to looking at the educationally-useful links to be made between 'Self-Study' and living educational theory. In the introduction to the first conference on Self-Study, Richards (1996) characterises the new movement as: '*research on the professional self in teacher education.*' (p.vi)

In the sense that characters are not 'in' a narrative, but constitute it (Winter, 1975: 34), I perceive self-study researchers to be both the subject and object of their own research. This bears obvious comparison to my own context as I create my living educational theory. In this form I am the protagonist writing the narrative about me as one of the characters. I would suggest that this dialectic enables me to bridge a gap between theory and narrative (which Winter rightly, I believe, perceives as problematic) in a unique and interesting way. I believe what at the moment differentiates self-study research from creating one's own living educational theory, is the extent to which researchers account for their own educational development. I cannot at this stage of my own educational development conceive of parameters more useful for me than accounting for that development when it is characterised by the ways in which I try to improve the quality of learning. At the moment this constitutes my own living educational theory, and it is the dialectic between improving the quality of learning and my own educational development which constitutes it.

Although the five writers in the quarterly journal do not give detailed accounts of their own educational development, they raise interesting issues to do with their perceptions of the professional development of other teacher-educators and the problems that they are facing professionally in their own roles as teacher-educators. After each account Whitehead comments from his perspective as a teacher-educator promoting the living educational theory approach. The self-study writers' representations are diverse, drawing on myth, story, dialogue and retrospective analysis. In commenting on the significance of creating a bridge between living educational theory and self-study, Korthagen (1995) says:

'I think the critical issues developed by the practitioners can serve as the foundations of that bridge. It is a difficult task, but an essential one. I would say that our journey has only just begun.' (p.104)

My living educational theory evolves developmental educational standards of judgement in the account of my own educational development:

Creating my own living educational theory rests ultimately on its holding as central my ability as an individual to create something original in the name of education. It cannot therefore, wholly rely on perceptible antecedents. My living educational theory has in common with others of its genre, a belief in the educational validity of originality as a standard of judgement by which partially to evaluate accounts which claim to answer questions of the kind, how can I improve my practice? There is also an integration of one's own educational development (Whitehead, 1993b) in

which values are problematised (Lomax, 1994a) and conclusions tentative and open-ended (Laidlaw, 1996). Most appositely to this discussion here, such accounts are increasingly characterised by the development of educational standards of judgement by which the accounts can be illuminated and evaluated (Lomax, 1994b). Whitehead (1993b) says about this area:

'The standards of judgement are...more difficult to communicate [than what is being judged]...I use both personal and social standards in justifying my own claims to know my own educational development.' (p.54)

The whole of The Introduction to this thesis is a testament to my application of explicit standards of judgements as a morphological device through which my knowledge can be developed and communicated. In this thesis, for example, I am seeking to encourage its judgement through, amongst others, a developing aesthetic criterion, because I believe it holds the essential key to my educational development. Winter (1987) writes about using the aesthetic as a way of guiding evaluations of an educational research account:

'the logic of...aesthetic form creates a set of possibilities made available by the ambiguities, metaphors, contradictions, reversals...embodied in the narrative itself.' (p.141)

In this text I have developed an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships as a way of improving the quality of those relationships. This aesthetic is not a static standard of judgement, but, like the other

values that this thesis seeks to explain in action (such as my truth, authenticity, ethics and ontology) it is evolving as I do with its ambiguities, metaphors, contradictions and reversals.

The aesthetic dimension of my claim to original educational knowledge is intimately connected, in terms of its explanation, to the immanent dialectic and creating my living educational theory. I want to explain this, because I feel it is crucial if I am to going to make my thesis comprehensible. The quality of the aesthetic, both for me and the Ancient Mariner, is such that insights are gained again and again through an awakening of a facility within us that makes us more able to act in the world. Through the aesthetic we perceive anew the purposes of our lives in such a way that we are both motivated to be life-affirming in our actions, rather than destructive. Aesthetic experience doesn't simply motivate us blindly, but leads us to understand how we might better access our own sense of what matters in the world and to see how we might put this new understanding into action. The effects of our actions we can only judge over time as we try to live our values more fully in our daily lives as a result of our aesthetic insights. What links our aesthetic experiences with our living educational theory is the immanent dialectic which enables us to understand over time the significance of our emergent values.

In addition, the creation of my own living educational theory is developing from my growing understanding of the authority of my own experience (Russell, 1993), and the authority of my emerging knowledge (see my Epilogue to Part Two) which is based on personal knowledge (Polanyi, 1958) as I try to improve the quality of learning. My living

educational theory looks, feels and gives voice to different forms of representation and knowledge in its creation than anyone else's living educational theory. At least I believe that to be the case. For example, my living educational theory attempts to describe and explain in part my commitment to an aesthetic balance for example, that Evans (1995) does not share in her doctoral thesis. However, like me, she can say:

'I draw my explanations - my theories - of my practice not from propositional knowledge directly - from the writings of others, but from my actual experiences in my [practical] role?' (p. 232)

She is creating her living educational theory from the narrative of her own development as a Deputy Head in charge of Staff Development in a comprehensive school using story with colleagues to help them share difficult value-issues as they try to improve the quality of learning. Her educational knowledge is drawn from her teacher-research into the dialectical relationship between her own emerging 'I' and the contexts in which she works.

My living educational theory creates a new form of educational research account:

Whitehead's (1989b) tenet about individuals creating their own educational theory through descriptions and explanations of their own practice as they ask the question, 'How can I improve my practice?' seems to me to have been a creative response to what Lincoln (1993) described as the crisis created through the lack of consensus as to what constituted valid educational research. As she states:

'With this crisis comes a proliferation of new forms.' (p.2)

I believe that I have created a new form of representation (Eisner, 1993) in this thesis in the creation of my own living educational theory. As an individually-oriented action researcher I have taken the decision to be responsible for the creation of my own educational knowledge. I have done this through a description and explanation of my own educational development which does not directly look like yours, or like anyone else's. It is metaphorically like the Ancient Mariner's, however, which is why I have chosen to represent my resubmission in this form. 'The Ancient Mariner' enables me to access those aspects of myself which understand the significance of the links I can make between my ethics, ontology and emergent knowledge, and then hints at how I might articulate them into an aesthetic form whose meanings are worthy of serious consideration (Foshay, 1995).

In preparation for the article which constitutes Part Four of this thesis, I wrote the first part through the action research cycle itself. It was a helpful and authentic way for me to be writing that particular description and explanation of my own practice. It assisted me in the construction of the article, up to the end of my work depicting the Year Nine group, and also, I hoped, in communicating the nature of the process to the reader. For the second part of my article, whose full exposition is The General Prologue, I needed to break away from that form. I could no longer authentically represent my knowledge in the creation of my own living educational theory, through that standard form. Without in any way denying the value which the action enquiry cycle form has had in assisting in my own

educational development, I felt that a break was crucial here. I had something new to say which I could not contain within that form. I recognise, however, that the form of enquiry is still immanent within the descriptions and explanations I offer in that account. For example:

I must recognise the power of the destructiveness represented by Zoë, Chloë and Lisa's actions and find a way to turn their perspectives to a more educational route (my concern)...I believe the way forward here is to do with a loving integrity on my part in which I genuinely value each one of them (my imagined solution).’ (p.23)

The break from the form of Whitehead's (1985) cycle, however, enabled me to bridge the gap between my creativity and the truth of my account in a way which strikes me now as authentic. The General Prologue represents my favourite part of this thesis. In fact it is my favourite piece of educational research writing. I am really proud of having written it because I perceive that truly to represent an individual speaking in her own voice about issues which concern her, is one of the main criteria by which I judge my own educational research. In addition, I believe that in The General Prologue, in MacDonald and Walker's words: '*content and intent emerge in form.*'

I also perceive this break from the action enquiry form as significant as a representation of my taking of power in the creation of my own knowledge. By appropriating my own form of representation I am also creating, in Eisner's (1993) terms, my own meanings. I am not yet sure where this new form is taking me, but I shall write about the possibilities in more detail in the final section of this thesis.

My living educational theory is dialectical

In 1982, Whitehead wrote:

'Ilyenkov failed to write a dialectical logic which transcended the limitation of the propositional form of his presentation because he did not show his own life in action as he struggled in a dialectical way to resolve the living contradiction which he experienced himself to be.' (p.108)

And this is precisely what I believe I have done in this thesis. I have transcended the limitation of the propositional form by describing and explaining my own educational development as I have struggled to resolve the living contradictions - aesthetic imbalances - which I perceive inside myself. My resultant educational knowledge arises from those different dialectical relationships which I have discussed throughout the thesis, all in various states of tension and need for resolution, (as I explained in particular in the previous section on the immanent dialectic). Similarly, my educational knowledge is not really communicable in a form like 'Returning', for example, because improvement of something in the world is not in an immanently dialectical relationship within the form of representation. My educational knowledge is only communicable in a form which seeks to explain the need to encourage learners - I, and my pupils and students in my case - to ask questions. *I* ask questions. *The pupils and students* ask questions out of the contexts which are emerging. Through this dialectic, my educational knowledge emerges.

The 'I' in an individually-oriented research question, as in 'How can I improve the quality of learning?', is not in a theoretical relationship to the

creation of my educational knowledge, but its pivotal point of reference and development as I take the appropriate responsibility for improving the quality of learning. The girls in my class are real people, with their own centres of consciousness and I aspire to develop with them a quality of relationship which Buber (1923) would call an I-You relationship. I believe that it is partly in my ability to relate to them as unique centres of consciousness that indicates the extent to which the dialectic between the 'I' of the action research question and the context in which the research is being carried out in a bid to improve the quality of learning, can be deemed to be educational.

I believe that the quality of my educative relationships is enhanced through my ability to research them. Within the dialectic between myself, the people I work with and the contexts within which I work, I come to know better how to improve the quality of learning. What I come to know (represented here as my thesis) is a direct result of my attempts to improve the quality of learning by enhancing my understanding of the aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships. In Dewey's (1916) terms I have learned to be:

'adequately moved by [my] own ideas and intelligence.' (p.16)

In addition I have also learned to be adequately moved by the girls' ideas and intelligence. As well as their uniqueness as human beings. And this is the crucial step for me. Let me explain. I perceive 'adequately' here to suggest that if I am to take the responsibility for my own ideas and intelligence, then I have to act on what I understand. This then suggests forcefully for me that I should regard others with the same respect that I

am showing myself. I am respecting myself by the belief I have in my own right and capacity to generate my own living educational theory as I account to you for my own educational development. I am still learning what it means to respect my pupils in the name of education.

Like the Mariner, the recognition of the value of others is not a finite revelation but is an immanent way of becoming in the world and being in relationship with it. When he recognises the beauty of the water snakes, he is on a pathway which leads to his actions becoming more and more fused with his ontological and ethical knowledge. When he killed the albatross, he was disconnected from the relationship between responsibility and the world. At the end of the poem his knowledge of the world is indistinguishable from his actions within it:

*'He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small.'*

This is not simply a description of the meaningfulness of life, it is now his own moral imperative. It is not simply that someone who loves everyone is engaging in the best form of life, but that he must now do that if he is to be true to his understanding. His telling of his tale, as I have mentioned before is an act of love in the world as well as his description of his love. I wish my own living educational theory, as represented within this thesis, not only to be a description and explanation of my own educational knowledge but the act of its creation as well. I wish it, just like the Mariner's tale, to be my own act of love. I will discuss this at greater length towards the end of this section.

Recognising his relationship to others enables the Mariner to develop through a dialectic between himself and the rest of the world which is characterised by responsibility. Being a teacher-researcher in the individually-oriented action research paradigm means for me to take responsibility for the dialectical nature of my own knowing, as I try to improve the quality of learning. It also means for me that I must find ways for girls like Zoë and Rebecca in Year Seven, or Claire, Laura and Sarah in Year Ten to understand how and when they can take responsibility for their own learning in a bid to improve it. Achieving this level of dialectical integrity is the focus of much of my research.

My living educational theory is concerned with balancing appropriate issues to do with power and knowledge in my educative relationships:

In the chapter on teachers generating their own knowledge which I cited from before in this section, Somekh (1993) does not seem to take seriously the dialectic she voices in her chapter because she does not seem to be personally implicated within her form of representation. She is not explaining her own parameters. She is didactic in the sense that she seems to be telling without showing. I want to be able to tell what I know (not in a way to suggest a stasis), but also to show within clear parameters of the dialectical nature of my own claim to know my own educational development, what it means to try to improve the quality of learning.

Part of what constitutes for me improving learning is exploring the layers of power in my practice and in the creation of my own educational knowledge. In other words, I seek through my research to disavow an inappropriate power within my educative relationships. I would perceive an appropriate power in my educative relationships to concentrate on

how I can help all the learners, including myself, to accept an appropriate share of responsibility for our own learning about something of value, and to understand what it means to do so. An inappropriate use of power was evidenced by my over-emphasis on one pupil, Rebecca, at the expense of another (Zoë).

I believe that my power as an educator manifests itself in different ways, depending on the circumstances. I would like to describe how my relationship to power within my educative relationships manifests itself. In describing these instances I am not necessarily suggesting that I wish to remove some of them entirely, as if they have no value. What is important is that I understand how to move appropriately between the different manifestations of my own power in order to improve the quality of learning. I am still very much learning how to do this.

One of the manifestations of power is as the didactic teacher. I go into the classroom with the knowledge: 'We are going to read 'The Ancient Mariner' because it is good for us.' This is indeed how I started with my Year Seven group in the Autumn term, 1995. I make a decision based on the authority of my experience (Russell, 1993) and my own emerging knowledge (Laidlaw, 1996) and as someone paid to teach English under The National Curriculum, that we would read and study 'The Ancient Mariner' because it is 'a great work of art'. And great works of Art are good for us! Apart from its stipulation within The National Curriculum I hold the view that 'The Ancient Mariner' is good for us because I believe that it can help us to understand ourselves and our position in the world better as we engage with poetic forms of meaning that are worthwhile in themselves. I agree with the SCAA document (1996) which says:

'The arts and humanities explore the human spirit, including the dark side of nature. The arts can contribute to forming individual and collective values by providing heroes, heroines, villains and cautionary tales, as well as complex situations which challenge our moral judgement.' (p.14)

So, when I make my choice of literature, I am appropriating a high level of power in terms of what is going to happen in the classroom and why. However, I believe that the authority of my own experience (Russell, 1993) justifies my use of power in this way.

Another way I respond to power as an educator within my educative relationships can be seen when I listen and take into consideration the voices of my pupils and others, but ultimately I still say what is true or false. Last November, Julia and I had a conversation about the poem:

Julia: *I don't understand that Life-in-Death bit.*

Moir: *What do you mean?*

Julia: *Who is she?*

Moir: *She travels around with Death.*

Julia: *So..Oh, I don't understand.*

Moir: *She's his mate. His wife, if you like.*

Julia: *And what does she do?*

Moir: *She plays games of dice with Death to see who wins whose lives. Life in Death, you see. The Mariner is alive but amongst all the dead other mariners. In your story now, I think you have to describe that so that your reader can understand it. Do you see?*

Julia: *Yes, I think so. Shall I show it to you when I've written it down?*

Moir: *Of course, love!*

I take responsibility here for the knowledge which is emerging as a direct response to Julia. I am the teacher and she has a legitimate question which I have an obligation to answer.

Another illustration of the way in which I recognise the way power operates within my educative relationships, is the point at which I help the pupils to voice their right, as I perceive it, not only to differ from my point of view, but to explore it and to learn what it means to take responsibility for their own point of view. When Esther wrote in her diary to me in December:

'I want to be able to play the Mariner part sometimes, i know I get to play parts in the drama but I want to play the mariner. Do you think it might happen next week?'

And my reply:

'Come and talk to me about it, Esther. I'm not sure that it is really a good idea at this stage to have class-performances when people are getting ready for their presentations at the end of term. Come and see me on Thursday.'

Esther then wrote back after our talk on the Thursday:

'I don't really want to do the mariner agan now becaus I need

to work on the play with Poppy and shes worrid if we dont get enogh time to practise.'

It seems to me here that I am open to Esther's concern as an individual, but that I am also stressing the importance of bearing others in mind and the plans we have made about what we are going to do at the end of term. I stress here the curricular whilst still taking her seriously. Her mentioning of Poppy's needs here seems to me to represent a widening of Esther's perceptions about what is and what is not appropriate at this stage in her learning about 'The Ancient Mariner'. My entry suggested that I was not going to allow her to take over in an inappropriate way.

Another manifestation of the power I hold in my educative relationships with learners, sees me becoming more of a learner myself and asking the children to help me to learn how I can teach them better. I throw open process as well as knowledge for legitimate criticism. In this scenario we work through issues to do with the Mariner poem which comprise their responses to the poem and to the values underpinning it. Early in our Ancient Mariner project we had the following conversation:

Moira: *How are we going to do this then? If we've got Jo as the Mariner in the drama, how can she do the narration?*

Emily: *I could do it.*

Rosemary: *But you're supposed to be helping us...*

Vikki: *Perhaps Jo could write the script, the things she wants to say about what it's like being the mariner and everything, you know, and then someone else could read it, like a voice-over. I saw...*

Jo: *I'm not sure I want to do the part anymore.*

Moira: *The script or the main part, Jo?*

Jo: *Either really.*

Laura: *But you're really good and we all voted you for it, so you have to do it now.*

(Chorus of assent)

Jo: *O.K., I'll do the main part. Do you think Kelly could do the voice-over?*

Kelly: *Yeah, O.K.. What do I have to do?*

In the above extract I do not intervene in the same way at all that I did with Esther before. This is because I believe that enabling the girls to negotiate the processes they are working with, will help to improve their curricular and moral learning. The learning needs of the children truly began to shape the classroom processes in such a way that the educational knowledge which emerged was recognisable to many members of the class. When Zoë started to talk to me about Bosnia and Northern Ireland (see the end of The General Prologue) she reflected back to me that she had engaged with some of the issues which came out of the classroom through the year in a way which appeared to be significant to her and in ways which I also believe are of value in her curricular and moral learning.

Of course, as you have seen, I do not always exercise my power appropriately in my educative relationships and I want my living educational theory, in its present form, to reflect this. This is why, for example, I have gone into great length about my educative relationship with Zoë and others in this thesis (particularly in the Epilogues). I am still learning how to exercise my power appropriately within my educative relationships.

With the Year Seven class and the year Nine from the previous year, I have begun to open the learning process more through the evolving of developmental standards of judgement in the work we did together as they presented their understandings in their own forms and then evaluated the outcomes. However, I have not yet reached where I want to be, because in the knowledge which I am developing through such experiences (as represented in this thesis) I have not yet learnt how to represent this process with the learners themselves. I feel that this is the next step. Our representation of the processes and our understandings about them, exist at the present time only in fragmented class-journal form. I believe, but I may be mistaken, that I could help to improve the quality of learning about something worthwhile through a greater degree of negotiation about what it is I write about in my educational research. My concern is to turn my educational research into a more authentic form - perhaps our educational research. This of course, would depend on the pupils' full willingness to be co-participants in such an endeavour. (Please see the final section of the thesis for more comments on my intentions.)

Creating my own living educational theory is an act of love and personal responsibility:

**'He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small...'**

In 1808, the Romantic essayist, William Hazlitt, wrote:

'The love of power is the love of self. The love of liberty is the love of others.' (p.34)

Throughout my educational research I have sought ways of diminishing the love of power in my practice and releasing the power of love for, as Peck (1990) writes:

'If I truly love another, I will obviously order my behaviour in such a way as to contribute the utmost to his or her...growth.'

(p. 167)

Resubmitting this thesis has been an enormous task. At times it has been a burden. Often I have wanted to give up. Teaching much of the week does not sit comfortably with the rigour needed to submit a text of this complexity. I enjoy writing papers (Laidlaw, 1996, for example) and most especially, The General Prologue, but I find the exacting nature of resubmitting a thesis draining and enervating. Why bother, then?

I bother because I care passionately about education as I said in The General Prologue, and I care passionately about education because I want to make the world a better place! I cannot do it alone, of course, and I have chosen education because it is a structured medium through which, in negotiation with others, I believe I can do the most good in this world. As I have said elsewhere in this thesis, particularly in the Epilogue to Part Two, I take with Sockett (1989):

'education to be a moral business. [Teachers'] acts and actions in classrooms and the implemented policies of an educational institution or a system are at least open to judgement on moral criteria...' (p.33)

He goes on to say:

'If...we are committed to moral purposes in education and if we expect our actions to be judged by professional standards (themselves moral), then we need to continue to build up an account of our moral base. On this account it would be primarily moral.' (p.38/39)

Elliott (1989) commenting on Sockett's article above, says about the moral values Sockett alludes to:

'such values characterise a desirable relationship between teachers and learners, within the activity of learning itself.' (p.92)

This thesis is my attempt to build up an account of my own moral base in the name of education through a description and explanation of my own educational development. This is partly characterised by the evolving of what I perceive as desirable educative relationships between myself and other learners in order to improve the quality of learning. I have done this mostly through the development of an aesthetic morphology of my educative relationships and from the evolving of developmental standards of judgement, particularly the aesthetic, in evaluating the educational value of the processes themselves and my research writing. It is from the moral base of my educational research that I am moved to produce this account of my own educational development.

Although I do not attribute a causal reality to the processes of my life, I believe that my former experiences have taught me a great deal about why

I should bother. Not bothering seems to me to create only unhappiness, to perpetuate despair and meaninglessness and emptiness. Like the Ancient Mariner, like countless millions of other people, I have learnt the hard way. So now I want to do something worthwhile with that learning. I have learnt that however arduous it is, I must believe in the meaningfulness of my life and the lives of all other people. Not to do so is to give in to that unhappiness, despair, meaninglessness and emptiness. Discovering how to improve my practice through action research has turned my sense of vocation into something I can develop and grow with as I try to improve the quality of learning with students and pupils. In my own educational development I have sought a generative balance between my own human needs as an individual wishing to take responsibility for her own life and the needs of others in my care, as I have tried - with them - to improve the quality of learning for all of us.

But why don't I simply continue with my classroom research in a more informal way and save myself the trouble of public accountability on this scale? Well, given what my life-experiences and educational research have taught me, if I did that I would feel I was ignoring something I hear echoing throughout my teacher-research. It is still difficult for me to articulate what I have learnt in my research, but the echoes are something to do with love and something to do with responsibility. I feel now that if I understand something about my educational practice, then I need to follow it through as far as I can because I may learn something of value which can help me to improve the quality of learning with my pupils in the classroom. Improving the quality of learning seems to me like a responsibility which I can only fulfil through love. I have learnt that there are links to be made in my educational knowledge between love and

responsibility. Creating my own living educational theory is, I believe, a responsible way to channel the love which motivates me - and which I hope shines throughout the thesis - into improving what I do in the classroom for the possible benefit of all of us in the learning process.

Peck (1983), puts this sense of responsibility as a result of one's own insights in this way:

'simply because I know [what my responsibility meant] I have grown strong enough to do the learning and attempt the work. And it is our task to work the fields that we know.' (p.76)

This strongly echoes Paskow (1988) whom I quoted and discussed in Part Three of the thesis:

'The world is goal-directed; each of the creatures of this world...is not only complex matter responding solely to mechanical forces; each is also being attracted by something that lures it to its own self-development...Our task as humans is to abet this ontological principle.' (p. 153)

The field I have chosen to know is education and Action Research has enabled me to channel what it is that lures me to my own self-development within it. Creating my own living educational theory is, it seems to me, a completely rational response to my own sense of making meaning and purpose in my life as I try to improve what I am doing in the name of education. It enables me to engage in dialogues with others which increase my understanding of my subject, education, in such a way that

can help me to improve my practice. Popper (1963) writes about engaging with others in rational processes thus:

'Rational criticism may develop [from the opinions of others] and standards of rationality...And this criticism may in time develop into systematic attempts to discover what is weak and untrue in other people's theories and beliefs and also in one's own.' (p.384)

For me part of the rational process has been learning to listen to the echoes I alluded to earlier. These resonate somewhere within and seem to reconcile the dialectic between responsibility and love so that I experience what it is for me to be whole. Elliott, (1989), partly in response to Whitehead's (1989) article in the same journal, writes that in engaging in educational research from the position of an individual who experiences herself as a living contradiction:

'in realising such values the teacher also realises him/herself... Such theorising is the reflexive or dialogical...activity of the teacher who is consciously striving to realise him/herself as an educator in practice by overcoming the experience of negation. Educational theorising for Whitehead, is a form of reflexive enquiry aimed at realising the 'self in action'. This is why Whitehead argues that an educational theory is the basis of a teacher's claim to know his or her own professional development.'
(p.92)

Although I subscribe to Whitehead's view that creating my own living educational theory can be achieved through, for example, this description

and explanation of my own educational development, the description and explanation of the values I come to are my own, not Whitehead's. And although I fully concur with Elliott (1989) writing about Whitehead's work that:

'moral values cannot be understood by simply examining the meanings of the terms we use to express them in language... Moral values are fundamentally defined in and through the actions we undertake to realise them,' (p.93)

the moral values themselves that motivate me are not anyone's but my own. They may be informed by others (and clearly as this thesis shows they are and should be) but, as Kok (1991) comments at the end of her Masters dissertation in relation to her action research conducted in the School of Education:

'The values I bring back - [are] not your values, but the values I have come to on my own.' (p.121)

My moral values are concerned with appropriating responsibility wisely and with love in the name of education (as I explain in the Epilogues to Parts One and Two). Creating my own living educational theory encourages me to find out what my own values are in order to improve the quality of learning. As I reflect on past actions and look at my present practice, the echoes I hear move me to further action:

*'Like a meadow-gale of spring -
It mingled strangely with my fears,*

*Yet it felt like a welcoming...
Swiftly swiftly flew the ship.'*

I am motivated to take responsibility for my actions in the name of education through accounting to you for my own educational development as the expression of my own living educational theory. If I am to take full responsibility for creating my own living educational theory as an act of love and personal responsibility, then I have to learn to listen to what my research appears to be telling me as I engage with others in the processes of improving learning and becoming accountable for them. I am increasingly learning the value to my own educational development of what it means to become accountable in the name of education (a process which began when I administered the World Congress on Action Research here at the University of Bath (Laidlaw, 1994d)). I still, however, feel that I need to integrate more within my future accounts, the understandings of my pupils and colleagues and other writers in educational research in order to improve the quality of my own learning and writing about that learning.

Macbeth, in Shakespeare's tragedy, says pessimistically that Life:

*'is but a walking shadow. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound
and fury, signifying nothing.'*

I disagree fundamentally with this philosophy. Macbeth has the tragic flaw of ambition and realises at the end of the play that all his machinations have gained him nothing. I believe his life means nothing to him because he has made it mean nothing. I don't want the tale of my life to be told by

an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. I want it to reflect my concern to live meaningfully in the name of education, to be a tale which signifies something, not only to me, but to others, as we try to make the world a better place than reflecting the despair of Macbeth's self-fulfilling prophecy. I think he sees nothing in front of him that matters because he has not managed to integrate within his own view of life the necessity of planning for the future in ways which make the present purposeful. He seems to have no coherent view of the past, present and future which excites him. I believe this to be his tragedy. Ultimately, the Mariner and I are luckier than Macbeth. We are capable of evolving a way of living from our experiences which projects meaningfully from the past into the present and through to the future. In order to place this thesis in the context of a purposeful projection into the future, I now want to pass to the final section of this thesis as I outlined at the beginning of this Epilogue:

□ My educational intentions in the light of my teacher-research

□ I would like to write a book about my own approach to the teaching of poetry as a moral endeavour in the light of my teacher-research as represented in 'The General Prologue'. In this text, as well as discussing my approach to 'The Ancient Mariner' I would also want to consider Robert Frost's poem, 'The Road Less Travelled' in the way I taught it with a Year Seven group. I believe this book would be not only a contribution to methodology but also educational knowledge in the sense that it would stem entirely from my own classroom-based practice. I also see it as a rational development of my own living educational theory as represented in this thesis.

□ I also wish to collaborate with Jack Whitehead on a book about an epistemology of teacher-education research. I would be collaborating from my point of view as a teacher-researcher in the classroom who is trying to improve the quality of learning with her pupils. The volume would be submitted to the Teachers College Press at Columbia University in America, where some of the instigators of the educational action research movement were active in the forties and fifties. I see the purposes of this book being first to describe and explain the ways in which the educational values of individually-oriented action-researchers based at Bath are emerging in their practice over time as they try to improve the quality of learning. Secondly I see it developing the educational knowledge which is emerging from such reflections. Thirdly I believe the book will further illuminate the educational significance of the dialectic between educational values and educational development.

□ I wish to continue working with the Action Research Masters degree group in the School of Education here at Bath University. In this context I can, with university colleagues and students, continue to develop the knowledge-base of an individually-oriented approach to educational action research as we try to improve the quality of learning.

This thesis has been concerned with explaining how improving the quality of learning in the classroom is linked in my practice with a concern to improve the educative quality of my relationships with students and pupils. I have always been more overtly concerned with individuals than knowledge and yet as you can see my intentions above are almost all concerned with improving the quality of educational knowledge. In

addition I have worked tremendously hard on this thesis as my own contribution to educational knowledge, so I do care about it. Like Trapedo-Dworsky & Cole (1996) I believe that the kind of research I have undertaken is academic research and that the knowledge I represent here is academic knowledge. I also believe that submitting this thesis for legitimization within the Academy is important in terms of what can be perceived as educational knowledge. As the writers alluded to above argue cogently:

'Research that is both personal and practical in its orientation not only endangers the reputation of the academy but also is part of a political agenda to challenge traditional conceptions of what counts as knowledge and research.' (p.22)

I also identify very strongly with their question at the end of their article:

'How do we as a community of researchers...create a legitimate space for ourselves and our work within...the broader educational and academic community?' (p.22)

The Ancient Mariner's tale is not his alone because others can hear it and learn from it. It explains him to himself but it also communicates to others. It is one of my aims through this thesis to further the legitimization of my own space as an individual asserting her right to make original contributions to educational knowledge. I believe that what I have to say will make some sense to some others and I offer this resubmission to you in that spirit.

Like the Ancient Mariner, I now understand that such an endeavour also enables me to improve the quality of my educative relationships as together we learn something of value.

□ September, 1996. And most of all I wish to continue my teacher-research in the classroom as I help the girls to learn more about English. This year I have a Year Seven, a Year Eight and a Year Ten class. I wish to continue to negotiate with them issues to do with power and knowledge as I help them to learn more about English. I hope to do this through action planning (which I wrote about in Part Four), interactive journals and learning partners as we evolve together developmental educational standards of judgement by which our work can partly be evaluated. I have already started these processes with all my English Groups. Here, for example, is the action plan and letter that I have written in response to my Year Seven girls. I reproduce it here in order to give you a sense of my continuing attempts to live out my educational values more fully in my practice:

*Penn House,
Monday, 9.9.96.*

Hello again!

Well, you've survived the first week. Was it as difficult as you thought it might be? I really enjoyed meeting you all and starting our work together. I also enjoyed your sense of humour, your eagerness, your smiles and laughter, and your concern to try your best. I am really impressed by your attitude to everything. Well done! I spoke to your tutor, Mr. J., and told him how much I was looking forward to working with you, now that I had met you. He agreed that you've made a terrific start.

How do you think things are going? I hope you feel free to let me know what's happening from your point of view. I meant what I said last week, that you're the expert on how you learn. If you tell me what helps you, then I will be able to teach you better, won't I? If you keep quiet about it, I'll have to guess, and I might guess wrong.

This week I thought we might finish our action plans. I've done one too which is enclosed on the back of this letter. Please keep it in your folder so you can see whether I am doing what I set for myself too! I would also like to carry on with 'The Ancient Mariner'. I thought your reactions last week were exciting. It's my favourite poem and it feels like a privilege to be reading it with such a lively, interesting group. I gather that some of you took the booklet away to read. How did you get on? The language is a bit difficult in places, but the story is weird and wonderful, isn't it? I love the bit when the dead men rise from the deck of the ship and start working the sails even though they're dead. The poor Ancient Mariner doesn't know what's happening to him or why, but he'll find out, and it's rather scary when he does, I can promise you.

I thought that soon, we might do some drama about the Mariner, about what's happening to him on board ship. What do you think? How might we do it? Why don't you spend some time with your learning partner thinking of ideas and then we can discuss it?

Here's to another great week together! Love from Miss L. XXX



Action Plan with my Year Seven Group

Name: Miss Laidlaw 

Date: 7/9/96

1) What do I want to improve with the Year Seven Group?

Your understanding and enjoyment of English. Your sense of being welcome here at School. Your ability to ask questions that you care about. Your self-confidence as valued people. Your increasing ability to take responsibility for your own learning. Your ability to take some responsibility for your learning partner's progress.

2) How do I think I might do that?

Keep copies of your regular action plans. Listen carefully to what you have to say. Mark your homework promptly. Prepare carefully. Be prepared to do what I ask you to do when appropriate. Treat each individual fairly. Keep asking your opinions about what is happening. Respond to your learning needs as carefully and kindly as possible. Respond carefully and quickly to your diaries. By trying to see the world from your point of view as well as my own. By taking responsibility for my own learning about how to teach you.

3) Who could help me?

You can. You can tell me how to teach better. You can give me your honest opinions about what is happening in the classroom. You can try hard with the work I set. You can work with your learning partner in order to make the most use of your time in the lessons.

4) How would I know I had improved?

You would tell me in class, and in your diaries. I would see you improving the quality of your understanding and enjoyment about English and an increase in your self-confidence as valued people. I would see you taking more responsibility for your own learning. We would all be enjoying the classes more. I would hear you asking more questions that you care about having answers to. Your written work would become more accurate and careful, and I would see you taking a pride in everything you do. I would see you paying close attention to your own progress on your action plans. I would also see you taking an important interest in how your learning partner is doing too. You would feel relaxed in our English classes and look forward to us all learning together.



☐ I am also for the first time in my life considering becoming a Head of Faculty because I would like to have the opportunity to promote a sense of staff-development through an action research approach to the improvement of learning.

Endpiece:

Now I think it's about time I gave the Ancient Mariner a rest, don't you? Brought out of retirement to tell his tale yet again he is weary and in need of peace and quiet. So am I, but the writing of this thesis has been more than worthwhile for me. It has given me enormous insights into the person I am and who I want to be, and also what I want to do in the name of education. Writing this thesis has, as I wrote in my Masters dissertation, *'marked a significant stage in my own educational development'*. I am pleased with what I have written because it denotes the conscious beginnings of the rest of my life in education, trying to improve the quality of learning, enjoying the processes and delighting in the human warmth and meanings that evolve out of such relationships:

'Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed

The lighthouse top I see?

Is this the hill? is this the kirk?

Is this mine own countree?'

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